DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 742 IR 054 434

AUTHOR	Cook, Terry
TITLE	The Archival Appraisal of Records Containing Personal Information: A RAMP Study with Guidelines.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris (France). General Information Programme.
SPONS AGENCY	International Council on Archives, Paris (France).
REPORT NO	PGI-91/WS/3
PUB DATE	Apr 91
NOTE	101p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Archives; Confidential Records; Definitions; Developing Nations; Evaluation; Foreign Countries; Government Employees; Guidelines; Models; Preservation; Privacy; *Records Management; Standards
IDENTIFIERS	Archival Value; Government Records; Personal Information Systems; *Personnel Files

ABSTRACT

This study grew out of the discussions of a group of archivists convened in 1989. Although universal in application, the study was prepared particularly for developing countries and is intended for archivists who work with records containing personal information. The publication defines "personal information" and outlines the characteristics of records containing such information. Special consideration is given to personnel records of government employees. The appraisal of these records encounters numerous problems for which the study proposes general guidelines. A conceptual model (macro-appraisal) and its application in practical archival work are presented. A summary of the guidelines that highlights the key points of the study is included. (Contains 68 references.) (KRN)

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The archival appraisal of records containing personal information: A RAMP study with guidelines

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Paris, 1991

IR 054 434

Original : English

PGI-91/WS/3

Paris, April 1991

THE ARCHIVAL APPRAISAL OF RECORDS CONTAINING PERSONAL INFORMATION :

A RAMP STUDY WITH GUIDELINES

prepared by

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United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Recommended catalogue entry :

Cook, Terry

The archival appraisal of records containing personal information :
A RAMP study with guidelines / prepared by Terry Cook [for the]
General Information Programme and UNISIST. - Paris, UNESCO, 1991. -
99 p., 30 cm. - (PGI-91/WS/3)

I - Title

II - UNESCO. General Information Programme and UNISIST

III - Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP)

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PREFACE

In order to aid Member States, particularly developing countries, to meet their needs in the specialized areas of Archives Administration and Records Management, the Division of the General Information Programme has developed a long-term Records and Archives Management Programme (RAMP).

The overall objectives of RAMP are:

- to create awareness and promote understanding, among and within governments of Member States, of the values and usefulness of records and archives as basic information resources;
- to assist countries and regions, upon request, in the organization and development of their records and archives management systems and services necessary for full and effective utilization of these basic information resources;
- to promote and assist the advancement and dissemination of knowledge through the training of professionals in the field of archives and records management, which is the basis for sound archival policies and harmonious archival development.

RAMP activities concentrate on: infrastructure development; training and education; protection of the archival heritage; promotion of the development and application of modern information technologies and research in archival theory and practice.

This study, which was prepared under contract with the International Council on Archives (ICA), is intended for archivists working with records containing personal information. The meaning of "personal information" is defined and the characteristics of records containing such information are outlined. Special consideration is given to personnel records of government employees. The appraisal of these records, "an important part of our collective memory", encounters numerous problems for which the study proposes general guidance. A conceptual model ("macro-appraisal") and its application in practical archival work is presented. The study closes with a useful summary of the guidelines and a select bibliography.

Comments and suggestions regarding the study should be addressed to the Division of the General Information Programme, UNESCO, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France. Other studies prepared under the RAMP programme may be obtained at the same address.

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this study is to present guidelines for archivists and records managers, especially in the government sector, for the archival appraisal of records containing personal information. The aim is to suggest appropriate measures to reduce one of the major problems of bulk which all managers and keepers of modern records face, while at the same time preserving the best possible archival record. The concentration of the study, therefore, is almost exclusively on paper (or textual) records which, usually aggregated into series of case files, form the most voluminous records of twentieth-century governments.

The study covers an area of archival and records management where theory and practice are not well developed. Accordingly, the aim has been to produce a model and guidelines for universal application. It is appreciated that the standards presented may not be fully attainable in all archives, especially in those which are not adequately resourced and where significant uncontrolled backlogs of unscheduled records await processing. Nevertheless, appropriate use of the model and guidelines, as standards at which to aim, should assist any archives to devise practicable appraisal criteria, methodologies, and options, for its specific local circumstances.

The study is organized into five main parts. First, an introductory chapter suggests briefly the research value of, and associated problems in dealing with, records containing personal information. It also states the specific focus and, more important, the limitations of this report. The second chapter begins by defining the main archival terms used throughout the study, which may be useful for readers outside the North American and English-language archival community. The main part of the chapter focuses on defining personal information itself and on the characteristics of records containing such information. In addition, the chapter deals with the actual appraisal of two special categories of personal information records: personnel records of government employees and those essential types of personal information records that should always be retained permanently. It also considers a third category, where the archivist's hands are tied for political or other reasons. The third chapter advances a theoretical or conceptual model for appraising all other types of personal information records which archivists must assess series by series in order to determine their continuing or permanent value. This model is the core of the study; it places records containing personal information into a broader societal context and proposes a "macro-appraisal" approach allowing archivists to focus on the most important such series out of the thousands created by modern governments. Without this conceptual framework, practical appraisal guidelines would have no firm grounding. In the fourth chapter, appraisal criteria, methodologies, and options are presented, by which the insights of the conceptual model may be realized in practice. Certain practical and preservation issues relating to the appraisal of records containing personal information are also included. Finally, in the fifth chapter, the central points of the study are summarized in a series of Guidelines, which are cross-referenced to the appropriate section of the text. In addition to an appendix, there is also a select bibliography.

It is important to outline the collaborative origin of this study. In his role as Secretary General of the International Council on Archives, Michael Roper convened and chaired a meeting of a "group of experts" in Koblenz, Federal Republic of Germany, which over two days in March 1989 debated the issues surrounding records containing personal information. For this meeting, Siegfried Büttner prepared a background discussion paper, "The Appraisal of Public Records Containing Personal Data: An Essay on an Unsolved Problem." Terry Cook served as rapporteur for the Koblenz sessions. The following archivists were the participants in these discussions: Siegfried Büttner, Bundesarchiv, Federal Republic of Germany; Terry Cook, National Archives of Canada; Joergen Marthinsen, Riksarkivet, Norway; Gérard Naud, Archives nationales de France; Trudy Peterson, National Archives and Records Administration, United States of America; and Michael Roper, Public Record Office, United Kingdom. Henning Bauer, a social scientist from the University of Köln (Cologne), Federal Republic of Germany, was also present at the discussions.

The archival participants not only contributed many ideas which appear in this report during the intensive discussions at Koblenz, but they also submitted comments on my notes from the sessions, forwarded copies of various relevant reports and bibliographies, and reviewed the draft manuscript itself. I am very grateful to them all for their ideas, advice, and encouragement. Trudy Peterson was especially attentive in forwarding material and extensive comments. As Michael Roper later reflected, "it was very heartening to see the way in which a group composed of an American, a Canadian, an Englishman, a Frenchman, a German and a Norwegian was able to resolve the apparent gulf between the European search for theoretical soundness and the North American (and English) pragmatism to produce guidelines which should be of universal application." Indeed it was, and it is hoped that this report reflects that cooperative sense of enheartenment, and that readers will share it too.

I would like to thank as well five other colleagues who read the first draft of the manuscript and offered very extensive suggestions and many improvements: Gordon Dodds, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Canada; Luciana Duranti, University of British Columbia, Canada; Robert Hayward, Treasury Board

Secretariat, Government of Canada; Tom Nesmith, National Archives of Canada; and Helen Samuels, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States of America. Their thorough and often provocative comments have very much improved the final version. The second draft was read by three colleagues at the National Archives of Canada, who in turn raised points of substance and caught many infelicities of style: Ed Dahl, Candace Loewen, and Sheila Powell. I also want to acknowledge the support of Lee McDonald of the National Archives of Canada who provided me with the opportunity to be Canada's representative at Koblenz and to Eldon Frost of the same institution who arranged two weeks of special leave to write most of the first draft of this study.

While sincerely appreciative of the very substantial help I have received from all the above people, I think it is appropriate to single out Siegfried Büttner for special acknowledgement. Without his background paper, supported by vigorous discussion at Koblenz and extensive comments afterwards to me, the conceptual core of this report would have been far poorer. His vision of the societal matrix in which archival appraisal takes place is inspiring and often reflected in the following pages.

Terry Cook
Ottawa
August 1990

Notes

1. Michael Roper, "International Developments in Records Management," Records Management Bulletin 31 (April 1989), p. 4.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Value of Personal Information Records

1. A leading Canadian archivist once said that "of all national assets archives are the most precious; they are the gift of one generation to another and the extent of our care of them marks the extent of our civilization."[1] During this century, the size of that "gift" has increased dramatically, and in direct proportion to the increased interaction of the citizen with the modern state. As a result of the growth of government, information about citizens, whether recorded by or about them, is everywhere apparent in the modern records. The history of our "civilization" cannot be told without these records containing personal information, and it therefore becomes essential for archivists to preserve the most important of them as our gift to future generations. In addition to their primary (or original) administrative use in the agency which created the records, such records have value to archives in four major ways.

2. Certain categories of records containing personal information protect the rights of citizens. Archives were first collected millennia ago to ensure the rights of the sovereign, but now it is the people who are sovereign in democratic societies. Examples abound of the use of archival records containing personal information to support such people's legal and fundamental rights: land claims of indigenous peoples, compensation for victims of wartime or other government excesses, exposing illegal or unethical intrusions of the powerful modern state into citizens' lives (secret brainwashing experiments, exposure of unknowing soldiers or citizens to nuclear or chemical health risks, unacceptable police or spy intelligence methods, and so on). Records containing personal information also uncover tyranny or illegal activities of leaders; both Kurt Waldheim and Ferdinand Marcos' activities during the Second World War were unearthed in their personnel files. By providing a valuable source by which governments can be held accountable for their actions and their processes, such records are essential for the democratic process. As an obvious corollary, there are also administrative uses of such records, long after the primary, original use for which the records were first created has ceased to exist. Records created for one reason may be needed later by the government itself for quite another, usually unforeseen reason. To cite but one example, the same records created in Canada to control the forced relocation of

citizens of Japanese ancestry during the Second World War are being used forty years later to pay compensation to the people involved.[2]

3. Records containing personal information are of course the central underpinning of the new social history based on the insights of the *Annales* school.[3] So far this work by historians, and increasingly scholars in other disciplines, has concentrated on past societies and used older (and far less voluminous) records containing personal information. Yet the scholars of tomorrow will do the same kind of research using the personal information records being created today. The patterns and themes uncovered by such research not only enrich our understanding of the past, but inform us of the important dynamics and mechanisms in the society in which we live. It is essential that archivists preserve sufficient similar records to permit future generations to reclaim their heritage. Without these kinds of records, the story of governments can be told, but not that of people. The historical research potential for certain categories of records containing personal information is, in short, extraordinarily high and forms an important part of our collective memory in a democratic era.

4. Records containing personal information can also be important to the development and evolution of public policy. Case files collected over time provide the longitudinal and demographic data necessary to assess the validity of and the need for change in accepted policies, programmes, and attitudes. Treatment by the state of women, juveniles, immigrants, prisoners, indigenous peoples, the poor, and different ethnic, tribal, and religious groups, for example, has varied greatly over the past few decades. Sociological research into these variations could help improve treatment and services to such groups, reduce discrimination and bias, and indeed is needed to test basic academic hypotheses upon which such treatment and services were based in the first place.[4] On a broader level, the impact of state taxation policies, economic subsidies, and research grants may often be assessed through analysis of records containing personal information.[5]

5. Such records are of course also the lifeblood of genealogical research. As people search more and more for their "roots" in an increasingly rootless world, where a sense of personal connection to the past assumes for many a larger importance in their lives, archives will be under pressure to retain more personal information records to respond to this need.

6. In summary, records containing personal information are valuable to society in many ways. Yet, "traditionally, case files have not been retained by government archivists; policy

and operational files, with a token sample of case records, have usually been deemed sufficient documentation for any agency." The research value of these records, combined with new ways of manipulating the information in them with the computer, "challenge archivists to define anew their acquisition and selection criteria."[6]

Problems With Personal Information Records

7. The principal problem in defining anew such appraisal criteria is the enormous bulk of records containing personal information. There has been an explosion in the quantity of all kinds of modern records, whether personal information records or not. The Archives nationales in France has retained an equal quantity of records for the years 1945-60 as it has for those from the end of the Middle Ages to 1945: four centuries of earlier archives now equals fifteen years of modern records. In the United States and Canada, the amount of government records approximately doubles once every decade. In the United Kingdom, fifteen major departments in 1979 held 4.5 million linear feet of shelf space of individual case files, with a growth rate of 200,000 feet annually. It is estimated that the Canadian government held, in the mid 1980s, 2.5 million linear metres of active and dormant textual records, or some 20 **billion** pages of information. Again in Canada, all post-1945 immigration case files alone amount to triple the archival holdings of the National Archives of Canada for all government departments for over a century. Even the relative increases are large: the records of nineteenth-century governors of the state of Illinois average ten cubic feet, whereas recent governors amassed more than seventy-five times that amount.[7] These totals far outpace the resources of modern archives to ever think of keeping them all. And even if they could, few researchers would appreciate the result: a paper mountain impossible to describe and control adequately, thus rendering the location of valuable information for any research purpose either very difficult or impossible.

8. With overwhelming problems of quantity go those relating to quality. The interaction of the citizen with the modern state is very complex, fragmented throughout the records of numerous agencies, perhaps falling under different archival jurisdictions (national, provincial or state, municipal, university, and so on). Indeed, the growth in the number, size, and range of government agencies themselves has in this century been as awesome as the growth in the bulk and complexity of the records which they produce. Even for the records of a single programme or agency under one jurisdiction, most individual case records are created in hundreds of local or field offices, not maintained centrally

in the agency's headquarters. As a result, local variations of practice and procedure enter both the business and records-keeping operations, undermining the records' homogeneity.[8] For this reason, and because in such decentralized systems records are often misplaced, statistically valid sampling is very difficult. Furthermore, modern personal information records are most often aggregated in the form of case files, and these files are filled with photocopies, duplicated circulars, and forms and printouts of information captured elsewhere, usually in computer data bases. Unlike policy files which suffer from underdocumentation because important decisions are made by telephone, personal conversation, or in other ways,[9] case files often have a surfeit of forms. In this context, there are unlikely to be many forms missing from a case file and the essential decisions made concerning the citizen will be recorded, but the "real" reason behind the decision -- to deny an immigrant entry into the country, for example -- may well be unrecorded.[10] From these factors come two, ironical results: too much redundant information and too much missing (essential) information.

9. Another significant problem is the fundamental tension between the archival retention, and especially public use, of records containing personal information and growing concerns about the protection of personal privacy.[11] It is important to remember that personal information is provided by citizens about themselves; it is their information and its use by the state is increasingly being circumscribed. More and more countries have privacy laws which severely restrict the collection, let alone use, of certain types of personal information by the state, and by implication by its archives. There are also significant concerns about and even prohibitions against the linkage of information from discrete series or data bases to create larger profiles of individual citizens. As well, there are provisions in many privacy acts prohibiting the use of personal information for any administrative purpose other than that for which it was originally collected. As if these issues do not complicate archivists' lives enough, even where the creation of certain types of personal information records is permitted, the transfer of such records to an archives is sometimes explicitly prohibited by law.

10. To a varying degree, all archives face political pressure, whether explicitly from legislators or implicitly through lobbying groups, to retain more personal information records than they would if archival concerns alone were involved. In the United States, for example, with a strong military and patriotic tradition, it is very difficult, and in some cases politically impossible, for the National Archives and Records Administration to destroy military personnel files, even if they are voluminous and repetitive. Again in the United

States, a strong civil libertarian presence was mainly responsible for launching the action that led to the celebrated FBI records appraisal case. In Canada, archivists were attacked in the press and called before a royal commission established by Parliament when it was suspected (wrongly, as it turned out) that sensitive immigration records had been destroyed.[12] If there is a strong genealogical interest or tradition in a country, it is often difficult to destroy records that contain significant personal information on individuals, even if, using other archival appraisal criteria, the series would have marginal value at best. Archivists in all countries and jurisdictions must naturally be sensitive to these "politics of disposal" and attempt to balance such pressures with sound archival theory and practice.[13] However, they must remember that, in an age of resource restraint, each unnecessary record retained by an archives in all likelihood eliminates the acquisition and custodial care of one with genuine archival value.

11. Archivists face these problems without the traditional support of many of their user communities. While few social scientists still urge the retention of all relevant records containing any possible value (on the basis that no archivist can anticipate all future research uses), many still express regret that practical resource factors are conspiring to produce a less complete archival record. While keeping all personal information records may have been feasible and even desirable for records from earlier centuries, when there were far fewer records created and the citizen-state interaction was much simpler, society would now "regard such broadness of spirit as profligacy, if not outright idiocy. Instead, archivists -- like most residents of the real world -- must pick and choose."[14]

Appraisal: No Easy Answers

12. Such picking and choosing is not easy. Appraisal has been termed "the greatest professional challenge to the archivist" by the author of a leading manual on the subject.[15] Yet appraisal has often been done in a random, fragmented, uncoordinated, even accidental manner, producing a biased, distorted archival record.[16] The reason for this is the primitive state, at least in the English-speaking world, of archival theory on appraisal. To date this has rarely advanced beyond the "taxonomic" stage, that is to say, a descriptive categorizing of various values of records (such as evidential and informational, primary and secondary, and so on). It has rarely approached the level where research into concepts of societal dynamics has led to a theoretical model for appraisal. Appraisal, therefore, generally occurs in isolation, where various of these "taxonomic" values are

applied to each series one by one. (An alternative, which forms the core of this study, is a global or comprehensive approach, where series are compared in a "macro" way first to determine the most important, **before** each is appraised by itself.) As a result of this conceptual vacuum, a recent study of archival theory in the United States deliberately omitted appraisal from its coverage and asserted that the development of "a body of appraisal theory is perhaps the most pressing need in the archival field today."[17] If this is true for all archival records, it is especially so for records containing personal information, given the difficult problems they present. While general approaches to appraisal apply to all records, it has been rightly recognized that personal information, especially when aggregated in modern, voluminous case files, is a "separate problem" and requires special treatment.[18]

13. The archivist's task of appraising modern records containing personal information is made considerably easier, however, by the existence of sound records management in the agency creating the records. Where this does not exist, it should be encouraged, for the records manager is the natural ally of the archivist. Both look after the same records at different stages of the life cycle. Both have a vital interest in ensuring that records of continuing administrative value are preserved. Both have a need for reliable surveys and inventories of records, for careful centralized control of records, for effective forms design and forms management, and for the clear, logical, and consistent classification of individual records on to the correct files. And both are keenly concerned with the timely and economical disposal of records, whether through transfer to the archives or by destruction (in either case, perhaps after a period of dormant storage in a records centre). It is true that the records manager and archivist have significant differences in emphasis and orientation. The former is concerned with all records created while the latter ultimately only in perhaps 5 per cent of that total. The former is also accountable only to his or her parent organization and is driven by business and economic values while the latter must also, while not ignoring these factors, take a much longer and larger view encompassing heritage and cultural factors. Nevertheless, the archivist can obviously use many of the tools of the records manager to aid in the identification and transfer of a better archival record.[19]

Purpose of this Study

14. The purpose of this report is to offer guidelines for archivists for the appraisal of records containing personal information. Guidelines are to give general guidance, not

definitive solutions. They are intended to set directions, to provide a theoretical framework for approaching this difficult appraisal issue, and to focus thinking on an interim basis. It is recognized that concrete solutions or fixed rules for many of the issues concerning the appraisal of records containing personal information may only be achieved at some future date. In the first instance, appraisal of any sort of record series, let alone those containing personal information, is a subjective activity, there being no absolute, "scientific" answers. Appraisal is often choosing the best of several bad alternatives. And secondly, individual national situations will colour the application of these guidelines, in light of the indigenous nature of particular kinds of records and their creators, as well as national traditions for the development and use of archives, although, ideally, sound archival theoretical frameworks and principles should transcend such factors. Nevertheless, despite these qualifications, it is intended that these guidelines will not only aid archivists in the interim to deal with a difficult problem, but also set a path towards more permanent solutions as these guidelines are tested and then revised in the light of practical experience.

Limitations of this Study

15. There are various limitations to this study, in terms of what it covers and what it leaves out:

    a. It covers only records created by governments or the state. While its observations and conclusions may be useful to archivists appraising records containing personal information created by businesses, universities, labour unions, churches, or private individuals, archivists responsible for the records of such institutions will not find those situations explicitly addressed here. The author's bias in argument and examples is furthermore towards national archives.

    b. It deals almost exclusively with records containing personal information in paper (or textual) format. Micrographic or electronic versions of these records are mentioned only as they interrelate with paper records. Similarly, personal information recorded on maps, photographs, and film is also only mentioned briefly in passing.

    c. This study focuses tightly on appraising records containing personal information. Five closely related and germane subjects -- appraisal in general, records management and the records disposition processes, machine-readable records, privacy, and sampling -- are not dealt with directly. These are all the subject of other RAMP studies, and there is no intention here to repeat that work. Some conclusions from these studies, especially regarding sampling, are summarized for the reader's convenience, but the full argument and analysis in those reports is not restated.

d. Additional limitations concerning the types of records containing personal information covered by this study will become apparent in the next chapter, where definitions will be advanced which will narrow the topic to manageable scale.

Notes

1. Arthur G. Doughty, who was Canada's National (then Dominion) Archivist, writing in The Canadian Archives and its Activities (Ottawa, 1924), cited in Archives: Mirror of Canada Past/Miroir du passé du Canada ((Ottawa, 1972), forepiece. Doughty's aphorism is carved in stone on a statue in Ottawa as well as emblazoned on Canadian archivists' posters and coffee mugs.

2. For a general discussion, see Judith Roberts-Moore, "The Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property: An Overview of the Office and Its Records, 1920-1952," Archivaria 22 (Summer 1986), pp. 95-106. The role of the National Archives of Canada in making its records available for the Japanese-Canadian redress programme is explicitly dealt with in Nancy McMahon, "Coming Full Circle: Contemporary uses of the Records of the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property," address delivered at the Annual Conference of the Association of Canadian Archivists, Victoria, B.C., 1 June 1990.

3. The best statement is Tom Nesmith, "Archives from the Bottom Up: Social History and Archival Scholarship," Archivaria 14 (Summer 1882), pp. 5-26. This thematic issue of Archivaria, of which Nesmith was guest editor, was entitled "Archives and Social History" and contains numerous articles demonstrating the imaginative use of records containing personal information to gain fresh insights into society. Two other important studies aimed at archivists are G.J. Parr, "Case Records as Sources for Social History," Archivaria 4 (Summer 1977), pp. 122-36; and Peter Gillis, "The Case File: Problems of Acquisition and Access from the Federal Perspective," Archivaria 6 (Summer 1978), pp. 32-39. Beyond these more generic studies, there is a growing number of articles on the value and use of particular types of personal case records in an archival context; see, for example, R. Joseph Anderson, "Public Welfare Case Records: A Study of Archival Practices," American Archivist 43 (Spring 1980), pp. 169-79; David

J. Klaassen, "Achieving Balanced Documentation: Social Services from a Consumer Perspective," The Midwestern Archivist 11 (1986), pp. 112-24, and especially pp. 118-19; and John C. Rumm, "Working Through the Records: Using Business Records to Study Workers and the Management of Labour," Archivaria 27 (Winter 1988-89), pp. 67-96. For another perspective on uses of archival records, see Michel Duchein, Obstacles to the Access, Use and Transfer of Information from Archives: A RAMP Study (Paris, 1983), pp. 8-9.

4. Danielle Laberge, "Information, Knowledge, and Rights: The Preservation of Archives as a Political and Social Issue," Archivaria 25 (Winter 1987-88), pp. 44-50. The article deals with these broad issues by using records relating to juvenile offenders as the example.

5. It is important to emphasize that most public policy research uses personal information extracted from records, and therefore is interested more in runs of data rather than in series of records. Similarly, the research methods used by sociologists, public policy makers, and Annales researchers for the evaluation of personal information are **not** equivalent to the research and appraisal methods of archivists, although there may be a useful cross-fertilization.

6. Parr, "Case Records," Archivaria, p. 136.

7. For France, United States, and Canada, see Carol Couture and Jean-Yves Rousseau, The Life of a Document: A Global Approach to Archives and Records Management (Montreal, 1987), p. 184 (English translation of Les archives au XXe siècle, 1982); for Britain, see "Sampling Particular Instance Papers," RAD Occasional Paper No. 8 (London: Public Record Office, 1984), p. 2; and for Illinois, see F. Gerald Ham, "Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance," in Nancy E. Peace, ed., Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance (Lexington, Mass., 1984), p. 133. For Canadian immigration records and total metres/pages, see Terry Cook, "Billions of Records: What to Keep -- What to Destroy?" The Archivist 13 (March-April 1986), pp. 1-2. Other examples of these explosive trends are given in Felix Hull, The Use of Sampling Techniques in the Retention of Records: A RAMP Study With Guidelines (Paris, 1981), p. 2.

8. This was of course the central contention in the Federal Bureau of Investigation case file incident; the FBI assertion that information on individuals held in field office case records was either duplicated at headquarters or incorporated in reports filed there was shown, after long study, to be untrue. The best, short summary of this important case is found in James Gregory Bradsher, "The FBI Records Appraisal," The Midwestern Archivist 13 (1988), pp. 51-66

9. F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge," in Maygene Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., *A Modern Archives Reader* (Washington, 1984), pp. 330-31 (article originally published in 1975).

10. This important distinction and example was made in a letter to me by Trudy Peterson, 19 March 1990.

11. See Duchein, *Obstacles to the Access, Use and Transfer of Information From Archives*, for an excellent summary of this problem. A good introduction to the issues involved is D.H. Flaherty, *Protecting Privacy in Surveillance Societies: The Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden, France, Canada, and the United States* (Chapel Hill, NC, and London, 1989).

12. On this issue relating to the prosecution of alleged war criminals, see Terry Cook, "Nazi Cases Not A Factor. For the Record: Archivists Honorable," *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, 11 August 1986, p. A7; and Robert Hayward, "'Working in Thin Air': Of Archives and the Deschênes Commission," *Archivaria* 26 (Summer 1988), pp. 122-36.

13. The quoted phrase and many of the ideas in this paragraph are Trudy Peterson's, in her letter to me of 19 March 1990.

14. Ham, "Archival Choices," *Archival Choices*, p. 133.

15. Maynard J. Brichford, *Archives and Manuscripts: Appraisal & Accessioning*, Society of American Archivists Basic Manual Series (Chicago, 1977), p. 1.

16. The charge, made effectively and in my view with justification, is Gerald Ham's, in "The Archival Edge," *Modern Archives Reader*, p. 326. He adds (p. 328) that archivists have failed to deal with acquisition policy on any "coherent and comprehensive basis" because of "nuts and bolts" or craft tradition dominating the profession from its older custodial or curatorial emphasis.

17. Richard C. Berner, *Archival Theory and Practice in the United States: A Historical Analysis* (Seattle and London, 1983), pp. 6-7. This relatively undeveloped state of archival appraisal theory, at least in North America, is reinforced, although sometimes only implicitly, by two surveys of writing in the field: Harold T. Pinkett, "American Archival Theory: The State of the Art," *American Archivist* 44 (Summer 1981), pp. 217-19; and Nancy E. Peace, "Deciding What To Save: Fifty Years of Theory and Practice," in Nancy E. Peace, ed., *Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance* (Lexington, 1984), pp. 1-18. As will be seen in Chapter Three of this study, the European development of appraisal theory is more advanced.

18. Michael Cook, Archives Administration: A Manual for Intermediate and Smaller Organizations and for Local Government (London, 1977), p. 64.

19. The best introduction to this relationship and to records management generally is found in Ira A. Penn, Anne Morddel, Gail Pennix, and Kelvin Smith, Records Management Handbook (Brookfield, VT. and Aldershot, 1989). See as well Eric Ketelaar, Archival Appraisal and Records Management Legislation and Regulations: A RAMP Study With Guidelines (Paris, 1985); and Derek Charman, Records Surveys and Schedules: A RAMP Study With Guidelines (Paris, 1984).

2. RECORDS CONTAINING PERSONAL INFORMATION: DEFINITIONS, CHARACTERISTICS, AND SPECIAL CATEGORIES

Introduction

1. This chapter begins by defining the main archival terms used throughout the study. It is hoped that this will eliminate any confusion encountered by readers from archival traditions different from the author's. Thereafter, the nature of personal information itself is explained, and then various characteristics are described about records, or aggregations of records, containing such information. These characteristics are both physical and intellectual. The chapter ends by offering appraisal criteria for three special categories of personal information record: essential records which all archivists must retain; personnel files of government employees; and records involving political or other exceptional circumstances.

Archival Terminology Used in this Study

2. The same archival terms can carry different meanings in various countries around the world. While the significance of these terms, as well as a fuller definition of "records containing personal information," will only be apparent at the end of this chapter, it is necessary to define some basic terms first in order to avoid misunderstanding in the rest of this study. The most important terms are defined below.

3. Case File: A case file is not itself a record, but an aggregation of records and documents brought together because conceptually they share certain common interrelationships. Physically, the case file may be one or many file folders or other filing entities (box, envelope, drawer, etc.). Conceptually, the case file almost always relates to a specific event, person, place, project, contract, or transaction. Case file is the **generic** term used throughout this study to cover the most common and voluminous format in which archivists and records managers encounter records containing personal information. Case files may also be referred to in different countries as project files, individual case files, transaction files, personal dossiers, and so on. Nevertheless, there are two quite distinct types of case files, depending on the conceptual function of the records gathered in them:

a. Particular Instance Case Files: Case files relating to one event or transaction only. These may sometimes be referred to as particular instance papers. Examples could include applications to obtain a position of employment, to win an architectural competition, or to obtain a grant or subsidy under a specific programme.

b. Continuing Events Case Files: Case files relating to several or many events or separate transactions over time, all relating to one individual. These may sometimes be referred to as continuing case files. Examples include medical health files, insurance records, employee or student files, and police records.

4. Subject Files: Files which contain documents relating to a specific subject or topical matter. Whereas 20,000 separate case files might deal with awarding or denying scholarships to 20,000 students each year, the related subject file (or files) would concern establishing general operational procedures, methods, and problems for dealing generically with all of them, general reports on the results of the programme, and recommending changes to it.

5. Policy Files: A sub-category of subject files which establishes or defines a programme activity at a senior level. In the example above, the policy file might deal with establishing the scholarships in the first place, allocating a global budget to the programme, major changes in eligibility rules, and deciding whether or not to continue the programme. While often policy and subject records are mixed together on the same subject file, under good records management practice they should be maintained as distinct entities within the subject file classification system (usually as a secondary file block under a primary file number).

6. Personnel Files: Continuing event case files maintained by an organization for each of its employees giving personal data relating to their employment history and service. In some countries, this is called a personal file or staff file.

7. Administrative or "Housekeeping" Files: Files which relate to a function (personnel, buildings, finance, equipment, etc.) that is common to all government departments, rather than unique to the operational (i.e., specific programme) mandate of each one.

8. Series: Files, bound volumes, registers, or documents organized or maintain as a single, organic system because they relate to a particular subject area or function, result from the same activities, have a common form, or are interrelated by the nature of their common creation, receipt, or use.

Their interrelationship means that they should be appraised as a single entity.

9. Appraisal: This term, which is used in this study interchangeably with "selection,"[1] is the process of determining which records should be retained permanently by an archives according to a series of values. These values are discussed in this study.

10. Sampling: The selection of items or files from a series in such a way so that the items or files chosen are either representative of the whole or reflective of some significant characteristic(s) of the whole from which they were taken. Various sampling methods and terms will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Personal Information Defined

11. Personal information is any information about an identifiable individual that is recorded in any format. The Privacy Act of Canada, to cite one example for general guidance, gives an extended definition of personal information to include the following: information relating to race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, or marital status; the educational, medical, criminal, and employment history or status of the individual; financial transactions in which the individual is involved; any identifying number, symbol, or code assigned to the individual; address, fingerprints, or blood type of the individual; personal opinions and views of the individual (with certain narrow exceptions regarding grants and awards); correspondence sent to a government agency by the individual "that is implicitly or explicitly of a private or confidential nature" and replies to that correspondence which would reveal the contents of the original correspondence; the views and opinions of another person about the individual; and the name of the individual where it appears in a general context the disclosure of which would implicitly reveal information about the individual.[2] From another, more general perspective, personal information includes inquiries or complaints or observations received from an individual about any government programme, information on law enforcement cases or about any transactions of the individual with the state for social or other benefit programmes, statistical or computerized information about the individual, and files on current or former government employees.[3]

12. The above personal information can appear in many types of records. These include applications, declarations, inquiries and complaints, appeals, requests, claims, reports, contracts, lists, registers, rolls, awards, subsidies, grants, invoices,

certificates, loans, payments, examinations, questionnaires, hearings, agreements, wills, leases, licences and permits, patents, registrations, passports, allowances, and many, many others.[4] These types of records are usually designed forms, but their function can be expressed in letters and memoranda as well, all of which are usually aggregated in case files. It is the role of the records manager to identify, describe, and protect personal information records in accordance with the privacy act of the jurisdiction involved and with good records management practices.

13. Personal information records are created in many contexts. While listing all these would not be useful, the following are the main categories identified in a RAMP study which dealt with the issue: civil status and affiliation (births, deaths, marriages, divorces, adoptions); health (doctors' records as well as related hospital, social security, home care, and drug-use records); wealth and income (taxation, banking, investments, wages and salaries); crime and punishment (while judgements are public, all case file information of process, proceedings, some types of evidence, prison duration, amnesties, and pardons are restricted for long periods in most countries); employment records (personnel files, also student and certain client records); personal opinions, especially those advanced under explicit or implicit promise of confidentiality; basic statistical information (censuses, surveys); and police records (in many forms and considered in most countries the most sensitive type of personal information).[5]

Characteristics of Personal Information Records

14. Records containing personal information have many characteristics, relating both to their physical format and the circumstances or context of their creation. Taken together, these demonstrate the richness and diversity of such information. The paragraphs in this section describe some of these characteristics of records containing personal information. As will be seen later, understanding the complexity and interrelatedness of these factors is important for appraising such records.

15. Personal information is found in virtually every physical form of paper record or aggregation of records.[6] An important qualifier for this study is that personal information records are defined **only** as those organized and retrieved by a personal identifier: name, social insurance or other identifying number, etc. For example, subject and policy files **for the purposes of appraisal** are **not** to be considered as personal information records. Although there may be occasional exceptions, the personal information found in such

records is incidental to their main purpose and they must be appraised as part of the larger file registry systems and series to which they belong, using somewhat different (or at least modified) appraisal theory and criteria.[7] Similarly, case files arranged, labelled, and retrieved by names of groups, associations, and companies, rather than of individuals, should also be appraised separately, even though these may (and often do) have many records containing personal information filed on them.[8]

16. Physical typology. With these exceptions, the physical typology of personal information records or aggregations of records (that is to say, the various types of records where identifiable personal information can be found) are listed below in ascending order of complexity. The listing is meant to be illustrative, rather than exhaustive, for there are, as noted in section 12 above, scores of different types of records containing personal information:

a. **Forms.** The form is a record, printed or otherwise produced, with spaces for inserting information or data. While some forms have open "comments" or "remarks" fields, most spaces on the form are narrowly defined and the range of responses predetermined. Usually one form relates to one individual (and sometimes his or her family), and in this way is very similar to the particular instance case file. Forms on several or many individuals may be "batched" or gathered together into one physical filing entity or serial arrangement (financial vouchers are often maintained this way). This kind of personal information is very homogeneous and thus is increasingly transformed into computer records. It is important to remember that forms may be completed entirely by the citizen (questionnaires, modern census, some petitions), jointly by the citizen and the official (tax returns, mortgage approvals, many types of applications), or exclusively by the official (police records, candidate or client evaluations).

b. **Lists and Registers.** These are records in which essential core information, often from other records, is extracted and consolidated, rather than maintained in loose form. (A list or register is an aggregation of information whereas a file or volume is an aggregation of records.) Lists and registers, increasingly automated, are usually in chronological or numerical order. Examples are birth and death registers, militia rolls, electoral or polling lists, and payrolls. Such information may sometimes be recorded on cards. (Registers and lists can also be finding aids to other records; see "indexes" below.)

c. **Letterbooks/Volumes.** As with files, volumes are aggregations of records, where incoming and outgoing correspondence are accumulated, usually in alphabetical or chronological order. Incoming and outgoing correspondence, unlike on a file, is usually maintained in separate letterbooks. Unlike the subject file, however, correspondence in volumes is often retrieved directly, or through attached indexes, by a personal identifier. While this type of record is increasingly rare in modern bureaucracies, the automated office is in many ways its electronic successor.

d. **Particular Instance Case Files.** These files relate to one event or transaction, usually concerning one individual. The files tend to be relatively thin, very homogeneous in content, numerous, and cover a short time period (a few weeks or months, up to two years perhaps). As a result, they lend themselves easily for conversion to electronic format. Examples are files concerning grants, awards, and scholarships; vocational training allowances; immigration entry records; and many court records (The Queen v. John Smith, the bankruptcy of Jane Doe).

e. **Continuing Events Case Files.** These files document the interaction of the individual with the state in several related, but separate events, often covering several years or even decades. Compared to particular instance case files, these files thus tend to be thicker, have more varied contents, and cover a longer time period. Personnel files fall into this category as do police and medical records, various student records, etc.

f. **Indexes.** All of the above personal information records or aggregations of records can be served by one or more indexes. These finding aids may take the form of registers, indexes to registers, lists, card indexes, file history cards, or various types of computerized indexes. These indexes must also be considered records containing personal information.

While the above six formats where personal information is recorded or aggregated are, from one perspective, a physical typology of personal information records, it is important to remember that these are **also** conceptual or intellectual characteristics as well. The analysis, design, and standardization behind a form or the classification system for a file must be understood by the archivist, for these give the bare physical typology of the record its contextual significance. In these matters, through using a modern type of diplomatic analysis,[9] the form and structure of the personal information records must be understood by the archivist, for these will often determine or at least influence the subject content, and thus the appraisal of the value of the records.

17. Several observations may be made concerning the above typology of records containing personal information. The first that records managers and archivists alike must recognize is the interconnections between these different formats of records containing personal information. Related personal information may be found in two or more physical locations: a particular instance case file on one individual may be paralleled with or actually turned into a subject file and then later into a policy file, depending on the importance of the issue and person involved; information from the original file may be extracted and entered in some kind of register; there will be indexes to some or all of these record formats; and much of the information may be available in (or input to) computer records, the printouts of which or the statistical reports from which may well be filed back on the original paper case file. These interconnections and partial (or complete) duplications of information must of course be identified physically and understood intellectually in the appraisal process.

18. Other media containing personal information may be found either physically on the case file, or a cross-reference to such media may be found on the file, even though the other media are physically stored separately because of difficulties caused by size or format or fragility. Examples are x-rays, sound recordings of telephone wiretaps, police mug-shot photographs, cartographic material, surveillance films, and so on. As well, associated artifacts (medical samples, weapons, clothing) are often connected with or cross-referenced to a case file, but these non-record, non-documentary items should not concern the archivist.

19. Finally, the physical arrangement of records containing personal information can have a large impact on their appraisal. Letters sent to protest some major, controversial government activity -- abortion legislation, trapping of fur-bearing animals, immigration policy, for example -- can be used to document the ebb and flow of public emotion, **if** the letters are arranged chronologically. If arranged alphabetically by the name of correspondent or geographically, however, then this chronological dimension would be very difficult to discern, both for the appraising archivist and the eventual researcher. Similarly, indexing methods can distort or hide as much information as they reveal.

20. Context Typology. The context characteristics of a file with records containing personal information -- quite aside from its general subject content or thematic programme area

(immigration, taxation, etc.) -- include its general focus (scope or coverage) and the circumstances and location of its creation. There are many issues to be considered here:

a. **Focus (Scope and Coverage).**

-- Is the principal focus of the case file series on the actions and thoughts of the government employee administering the programme, the person (or citizen in this study) receiving or interacting with a programme, a third party, or a combination?

-- Is the coverage universal for the entire (or at least entire adult) population of the country or limited to special groups (armed forces, immigrants, various tribes), classes or occupations (miners' health files, pilots' licences), genders (family allowances), ages (pension claims or educational grants), or regions (agricultural subsidies, fisheries allowances)?

-- Does the coverage include the rejected and unsuccessful cases as well as the accepted and successful ones?

-- Within the coverage, are all cases available and documented in a standard way or are some consciously cut out (no file created), lost, or overlooked?

-- Do the files collectively cover the same time span as the programme under which they were created, or just a portion of it?

-- Are the files related to other series and other programmes?

b. **Circumstance of Creation.**

-- Is the documentation created directly by the employee and/or citizen, or indirectly by a third party (lawyer, translator, referee, reporter)?

-- Is participation in the programme required by law or voluntary?

-- Has the documentation remained in raw, unprocessed form or has it been replaced or supplemented by aggregated data?

-- Is the information in the paper record transformed in the normal course of business into microfilm or electronic format?

-- Is there one file or several files created on an individual in any one programme?

-- Are exceptional, controversial, and precedent-setting cases created or maintained separately from the routine and regular cases, by different file jackets, numbers, or colours or by indexing or abstracting the relevant information or by creating additional files (perhaps at an appeals or special hearing level)?

-- Is there significant discretion by the employee or citizen in creating the documentation or applying and interacting with the programme?

-- Is the main emphasis of the programme and thus its case files a single function (judicial, regulatory, investigative, licensing, taxation, subsidy or grant or award, social service, etc.) or multi-functional?

-- Despite a possible apparent homogeneity of a file series' content, format, and physical appearance over time, were there significant changes in the administrative structure, implementing personnel, mandates and policies, or even legislation of the programme, that may have affected the files' content?
-- Were the files used for more than one purpose by the creating or perhaps later administrating unit of the government?

c. **Location**

-- Are there various levels in the bureaucracy -- headquarters, region, field -- that created documentation on the individual's interaction with the programme, whether on one central file or on several files kept in each office of the administrative hierarchy?

-- If there are several files and/or several levels of bureaucracy interacting with the individual, are there formal or informal linkages of the resulting information?

21. It is important that archivists identify and assess both the physical and context characteristics of case files, for as will become apparent in the next two chapters these have a direct bearing on determining their potential permanent value within a theoretical appraisal model. These characteristics, however, are often not obvious, but subtle and buried. They can only be unearthed by the archivist undertaking thorough research into the nature and history of the records and their creators.

Special Category: Essential Personal Information Records That Must Be Preserved Permanently

22. There are certain categories or classes of records containing personal information which should be preserved by archivists around the world. These records may not necessarily be stored physically in the national archives and may be created by state or provincial and local or municipal governments. Nevertheless, their importance to research by providing the core demographic profile of the nation, to individuals' legal rights, and to government administration is incontestable. Archivists should collectively ensure that these categories of personal information records are safeguarded:

    a. **Records Proving Civil Status.** Records, usually forms and registers, recording births, deaths, and marriages should be preserved, as well as records of divorce and adoption, and citizenship and naturalization.

    b. **Land Registry Records.** Records documenting the surveying and disposition and transactions of land and other fixed property.

    c. **Records Falling Under Statutory Requirements for Permanent Preservation.** In certain countries, court records must by law be kept permanently, as must wills and decisions of many types of regulatory and semi-judicial tribunals and boards and agencies. The permanent preservation of **all** court records would present insuperable problems; archivists should verify which records must be kept permanently (on this issue of selectivity, see section 23 below).

    d. **Census of the Population.** The national census is the single most essential personal information record in terms both of research for many disciplines and for genealogists, and of providing the core demographic information vital to the design, delivery, and modification by the government of its own major programmes. Census data is of course very sensitive, and archivists must safeguard it from public disclosure until such time as the sensitivity has disappeared.

23. It should be noted that not all records connected to these four essential categories must be preserved. For example, while all the raw census data is essential, the questionnaires on which it was collected, various forms and process documents, and related subject files are not essential, and should be appraised by other criteria. Similarly, for court records, it may be that only the actual judgements and case precedents are vital, whereas the actual court operational records, transcripts, and case files are not. In short, for

these few categories of essential personal information records, whose retention is not in question, the problems they present to archivists do not concern appraisal, but rather preservation (storage cost and space, privacy and use, and their possible conversion to microfilm, electronic media, or optical disk). Such practical and technical issues, however, can affect the ultimate decision of how to acquire the records and thus do form an element, albeit a secondary one, in the appraisal process (see Chapter 4 for more on this distinction between appraisal and preservation).

Special Category: The Appraisal of Personnel Records of Government Employees

24. The personnel files of the government's own employees (including two subgroups: members of its armed forces and police) are a special category of personal information records. As mentioned before, personnel files are continuing event case files. However, for convenience, they are handled separately here. Personnel records are usually the only category of "housekeeping" or administrative records that contain personal information of significance. The retention of such records for their period of primary administrative, legal, and fiscal use -- usually the employee's active career and pensionable retirement -- is not an issue of archival appraisal, even though this period may extend to seventy years or more. The permanent value of such records primarily rests on their quantitative and statistical information, and will come from manipulating the electronic version of the record. Sociological and historical research into worker absenteeism, patterns of illness, gender and age issues, wages, human resource policy, and career mobility would require such data.[10]

25. In addition to this raw quantitative or aggregated information, which is usually best preserved in electronic format and not in the bulky original paper files, there are qualitative reasons for keeping **some** categories of civilian (i.e., non-military) personnel records in the original paper format. Noted individuals serve the state in all countries, and for the purposes of biography and the history of administration, as well as of the subject fields in which the public servants were involved (science, agriculture, transportation, and so on), their files should be preserved. There can often be found on such files, in addition to the paper version of information extracted to the electronic media, press clippings of noteworthy accomplishments, key speeches and publications, notices of awards, congratulatory letters, curriculum vitae, courses attended, bibliographies, and so on. It is to be noted, however, that the value of this qualitative information tends to be much lower in the 1980s

than in previous decades for two reasons. First, various privacy laws now severely restrict the amount and type of personal information which employers may create or retain on their employees, and also require the culling of files and destruction of certain types of information (work performance appraisals, for example) after short periods of time. Secondly, most basic demographic information in the paper file for more recent years is now available in electronic format.

26. Nevertheless, some personnel files, especially for earlier years, do contain valuable information. What categories of public servants' personnel files to keep permanently in archives is difficult to determine. In this regard, the Canadian model may be suggestive, although it is presented as a guideline only, with the recognition that circumstances will vary from nation to nation. In Canada, the following categories of civilian personnel files are kept: the top four levels of the government administrative hierarchy for all departments (the file on any person reaching at any point in his or her career the rank of deputy minister, assistant or associate deputy minister, director general, and director); the top level for all boards and commissions (chairperson, commissioner); all ambassadors, consuls general, and heads of missions in the foreign service; the top four levels (down to inspector) of the national police force; captains of all government vessels; surveyors and engineers involved in significant public works; all federally appointed judges; and senior officials connected with the head of state (Governor General), the legislative function (Parliament), and the judicial function (Supreme Court and Federal Court).

27. Other significant files to be kept, although more difficult to identify, are those of Canadians, in addition to the above, who did not reach these formal senior positions in federal government employment, but who in their careers either inside or outside the public service were recognized leaders in academic, scientific, business, medical, legal, or other fields; sports figures achieving national or international stature; recipients of major national and international civilian or military awards or decorations; individuals who served as Members of Parliament or of provincial legislatures, or who were mayors of large cities; and all civilian government employees killed while on duty (prison guards, surveyors, hostages). Furthermore, the files of employees who occupied unique positions in the government or who had unusually long careers may also be considered for archival retention, as well as the caveat category of those of "any individual involved in any act or event of major historical interest."[11] There are also other appraisal considerations for series of personnel records, in terms of treating them in common with all other personal information records, which will be addressed in the next two chapters. This section only

addresses particular aspects of appraisal relating to these records.

28. A special category of personnel records relates to those of the armed forces of the nation. Some countries are inclined to preserve all such records generated during periods of active warfare, as a memorial to those who served (and perhaps died for) their country and as files likely to have more intrinsic research interest. For peace-time military personnel files, in addition to preserving a profile of all armed forces personnel through various electronic records in data bases, a similar approach is recommended to that adopted for civilian personnel records in the preceding paragraphs: all files of all personnel reaching certain ranks (which will vary from country to country) in the armed forces should be preserved, as well as those of military personnel achieving particular distinction, awards, prominence, and so on.

Special Category: The "Politics of Appraisal," Genealogy, and Informational Value

29. As noted in Chapter 1.10 above, appraisal is sometimes taken out of the archivist's hands by political pressure. Whether case records from the Nazi period in Germany or military personnel files in the United States or financial records concerning Canadian Indians, certain national traditions make destroying some categories of records very difficult for the archivist. Here it is not appraisal criteria that are brought to bear, but rather resource questions of how far the archives can accommodate these pressures. The most obvious example concerns genealogy which, in recent years, has enjoyed an enormous revival and placed a concomitant pressure on archives to preserve records for this purpose. In simple terms of archival appraisal, guidance may be clearly given: in a national archives, case files of most operational programmes should not be kept for **purely** genealogical value or reasons. That does not mean genealogy is not important or that genealogists will not find useful information in samples or selections from case file series kept for other reasons, but it does mean that very few such series are preserved purely for genealogical reasons. Otherwise, archives around the world would keep **every** case file permanently for, by definition, they all have genealogical value. Just how many files and series archivists do keep will depend on the amount of public pressure to which they are subjected. Of course, genealogical information on a large scale **is** preserved in the four essential categories of records outlined in section 22 above. Such records, combined with printed and local sources (city directories, tax rolls, and so on), would provide basic genealogical information on all citizens. Any further detail on individual lives from specific programme case files, kept

solely for genealogical value, may with a few exceptions be a luxury archives can ill afford.

30. There are also series of personal information case files where the archival concern is **primarily** (and sometimes exclusively) the informational value they contain on specific individuals, places, or events. This is in contrast to the evidential value the files may have in shedding light on the nature of the government institution which created them or the collective value they may have in how they reflect the whole to which they are a part. Informational value as a concept exists in and of itself, without regard to what it evidences about government operations. Census returns or immigrant landing records are classic examples.[12] Two other illustrations of informational value might be small series of files concerning art acquisitions by a national gallery or senior research grants to leading scientists; these files would be **primarily** important for the information they contain on **each** donor and painting, or on **each** scientist and his or her project, without denying that both series (or a sample of each) would also contain evidence of the operations of government agencies. Conversely, a series of files documenting the subsidies for vocational training paid to hundreds of thousands of workers annually is not valuable for the information it contains on any one worker, but rather collectively (through a small sample, most likely) for the evidence it provides of how the programme functioned and was received. The appraisal of personal information records for the informational value they contain on specific individuals is straight-forward and follows the criteria of appraisal generally. Such criteria will be outlined in Chapter 4 (and have already been alluded to in the discussion of personnel records).

31. This study, however, focuses on the more difficult problem of appraising records containing personal information for their collective or evidential values. To understand better the archivist's task in appraising such series of records, which of course form the vast majority of personal information records, it is necessary to place them into a theoretical context concerning the way society creates and uses these kinds of records.

Notes

1. I recognize that this equivalency is not technically correct. In theory, archivists would decide which groups or fonds of records to target through an acquisition or documentation strategy of some sort. That would be followed by appraisal, which is the choosing

of series of records, or sometimes blocks of files within series, from those targetted fonds for transfer to the archives on a temporary basis. Selection occurs later on in the archives as the archivist arranges and describes the records, and selects out (and destroys) those without value while designating the rest for permanent retention. In working reality, there is (until very recently) no strategic targetting at the front end and very litle in-house selection at the back end; there is simply not the luxury of double appraisal, especially when dealing generically with case files, and thus "appraisal" and "selection" occur simultaneously.

2. Canada, *Privacy Act*, 29-30-31 Elizabeth II, c. 111, section 3. Curiously, with the exception of the Canadian act, most privacy legislation at the national level does not give a thorough definition of personal or private information; on this point, see Michel Duchein, *Obstacles to the Access, Use, and Transfer of Information from Archives: A RAMP Study* (Paris, 1983), p. 19.

3. Canada, Minister of Supply and Services, *Personal Information Index 1988* (Ottawa, 1988), p. iii.

4. This partial listing is taken from the Canadian *Personal Information Index*, pp. SI-1 to SI-33, and *passim*. For a very full list of the many different categories of individual records, see Maynard J. Brichford, *Archives & Manuscripts: Appraisal and Accessioning* (Chicago, 1977), pp. 22-23.

5. The categories are from Duchein, *Obstacles to the Access, Use and Transfer of Information from Archives*, pp. 19-23. The Canadian *Personal Information Index* lists more than 4,000 separate series of personal information records, from agricultural subsidies to veterans' treatment, from housing loans to postal contracts, from student summer employment applications to immigrant medical forms, from bankruptcy trustees to old age pensions. This is an excellent source for records managers and archivists wishing to conceive a way of identifying, describing, and controlling records containing personal information.

6. The following typology mixes together records per se (such as a form or index card) and aggregations of records (such as files and volumes). Having made the distinction several times in the text and again now, for ease of reference and not to burden the text with excessive qualifiers at each point, I shall refer to both generically as "records," even while recognizing that this common usage is not technically correct.

7. Concerning subject and policy files, personal information is often found in the individual memoranda, forms, reports, letters, and other documents on such files. The personal information is usually qualitative and subjective rather than quantitative and statistical, although useful reports of statistical summaries and aggregations of personal information may also be placed on such

files. Often individual cases which have precedent-setting value at the level of procedures and practices are transformed by records managers from a particular instance case file into a subject file, or at least the individual subject of the case file is referred to in the documents on the subject file. Such personal information records found on subject and, rarer, policy files are not homogeneous, often scattered and episodic, and not retrievable by a personal identifier (name, identity number, etc.).

8. Such scattered personal information on subject files is, of course, **still** personal information in terms of being treated with proper security and confidentiality by records managers and archivists and in terms of falling under the provision of privacy legislation.

9. Diplomatics, which is still generally unknown in North American archival circles, studies the actual form of documents in order to ascertain their validity and value as historical sources. Where archival science focuses on the provenancial context of records creators and of the records themselves and their informational content, diplomatics concentrates much more narrowly on the form of individual documents to elucidate their authenticity, status (original or copy), formal authorship, character as private or public document, and so on. For more details on the European origin of diplomatics, its nature, and possible applicability to modern records issues, see Luciana Duranti, "Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science," Archivaria 28 (Summer 1988), pp. 7-27, which is the first of a series of six articles. See as well Don C. Skemer, "Diplomatics and Archives," American Archivist 52 (Summer 1989), pp. 376-82.

10. For electronic personnel records and their appraisal, see Harold Naugler, The Archival Appraisal of Machine-Readable Records: A RAMP Study With Guidelines (Paris, 1984), pp. 42-43.

11. These categories are taken from the operational guidelines that accompany the General Records Disposal Schedule of the Government of Canada, Schedule 5: Personnel, which is issued periodically by the National Archives of Canada. The guidelines are in National Archives of Canada, operational file 9440-5, memorandum of Federal Archives Division to National Personnel Records Centre, 10 May 1982. The Personnel Records Centre is responsible for applying these appraisal criteria, developed by archivists in the Federal (now Government) Archives Division, to the personnel records of all government departments and agencies.

12. While conceptually this statement is true, in reality there is no such clear-cut distinction, even in the most obvious cases. For example, with the national census, the nature and design of the questionnaire form, the different types of data collected over time, and the markings of the census officers are all examples of evidential value. However, if these things were the **only** value of

the census records, a small sample would be sufficient for archival purposes.

3. A THEORETICAL MODEL

Introduction

1. This chapter will propose a model to aid in understanding the creation and thus the appraisal of personal information records. While the context in which this model is to be used will be outlined more fully in Chapter 4, it may be introduced here by noting that the appraisal of series of case files should occur in the following order:

-- First, the subject file series from the agency relevant to the information or programme documented in the personal information case files should be appraised, from the most senior policy and programme coordination levels down to the larger operational areas.

-- Secondly, related electronic records and systems should be assessed, especially all programme-delivery and programme-analysis systems.

-- Thirdly, personal information records should be appraised which are in the essential category (see section 2.22 above).

-- Fourthly, the case file series which are valuable primarily at a collective level or for their evidential value -- such series forming the vast majority of those created by government -- should be appraised (which is the focus of this chapter).

-- Finally, the appraisal of particular files in a series for specific informational or genealogical value takes place (which will be dealt with in Chapter 4).

While the model advanced and the research advocated in this chapter for appraising case files collectively, as well as the above schema, may be pertinent for appraising the other types of records before getting to these case file series (i.e., the subject files, electronic records, etc.), such wider applicability of the model is outside the scope of the present study.

The Failure of "Traditional" Archival Appraisal

2. When faced with a series to appraise, archivists have traditionally undertaken three distinct intellectual activities or, perhaps better, have asked themselves three different types of questions:

   -- assess the records in terms of their context, form, and content (such factors as age; time span; uniqueness; extent; internal structure; relationship to other records; evidence of their creator's activities, ideas, or organizational context; additional information on persons, places, and things).

   -- consider whether the records may be useful for present or (more problematic) anticipated future research in one or more disciplines.

   -- address practical and technical issues relating to the costs of arranging and describing the record, preserving and perhaps copying it, storing it, and making it available for research must be considered, as such factors may change an otherwise positive appraisal decision to a negative one.

3. What is missing from this traditional approach to appraisal is a general theoretical overview of records creation in society. Such an overview is essential in order for archivists to decide which series of records it is that they should be applying the above three levels or sets of appraisal questions to in the first place. Where personal information records are concerned, as they have been defined in this study, this involves building a model or paradigm of how the citizen interacts with the state. Some such interactions are naturally more important than others for revealing the nature of society, the dynamics of government, the lives of ordinary people, and prevailing ideological issues. To determine which citizen-state interactions are most important and under what circumstances they occur requires isolating the key factors involved, and the significant variables of each one. Once the most important interactions have thus been identified, only then should the actual series of records containing personal information created by those interactions draw the archivist's attention in applying some of the above-mentioned traditional appraisal criteria. The "macro-appraisal" based on this theoretical model must come first, because it is essential in coping with the great complexity and enormous bulk of modern personal information records: dealing on an ad hoc basis with particular series of such records one by one without that theoretical context leads the archivist into a hopeless quagmire. Yet this theoretical approach to appraisal, as noted before, is largely absent from archival literature and

archivists concede that its absence is responsible for haphazard and poor appraisal decisions.[2]

Appraisal: From the Physical to the Conceptual

4. Appraisal in the first instance at least must be seen as an issue of mind over matter. The information context and the records-creating processes surrounding a series of records must transcend, for the archivist, the storage medium which carries the information or even its subject content.[3] Archivists must not get distracted initially by the physical form or schematic organization of the record, but rather look at the processes and functions behind records creation. In this first and most important phase of appraisal, they must understand why records were created rather than what they contain, how they were created and used by their original users rather than how they might be used in future, and what formal functions and mandates of the creator they supported rather than what physical characteristics they may or may not have. Archivists must look at the essence of the communication between the citizen and the state rather than at what was communicated. This intellectual link to the creator shifts the central importance of provenance from the physical origin of the records in their creator's office to their original conceptual purpose in that same office.[4] Once this is understood, the archivist can target the records or groups of records likely to have the highest value and appraise them in more detail.

5. This conceptual approach to appraisal of records containing personal information does not deny the importance of the traditional appraisal steps outlined in section 2 above: determining evidential and informational value, research use, and practical and technical factors. Rather, it posits that these issues or questions should only be considered later by the archivist, **after** the "macro-appraisal" has illuminated which particular series of records are worth appraising at the secondary stage, **or** better that they should be considered as component parts of the theoretical approach. In either case, they should not be considered, as they usually are, in isolation as the only important factors.[5]

6. This conceptual approach to appraisal requires a research agenda for archivists in their daily activities. **Appraisal is a work of careful analysis and of archival, diplomatic, and historical scholarship, not a mere procedure or process.** Applying guidelines or checklists in the appraisal process, as well as developing broader acquisition strategies, only works if such application is based on a rich understanding by the archivist of the history of the records creator, its official functions and legal mandates, its internal organizational

structure, its decision-making processes, its records-creating procedures, and the changes in all these over time, as well as a similar understanding of the often subtle characteristics of the records themselves. These factors are especially difficult where the personal information involved is shared in different jurisdictions or, even worse, across national boundaries. Unravelling the complexities of the citizen-state interaction in light of these factors is a challenging intellectual work rooted in careful and sustained research.[6] In this approach, searching out actual and anticipated research uses of the records is **not** part of the archivist's job. Indeed, acquiring records to serve or follow research trends is unarchival, and distorts good appraisal.

7. This new approach must be coupled strongly with an active, archivally driven emphasis to records management and records disposition activity (a point which will be amplified in Chapter 4). In an archivally directed appraisal environment, archivists focus actively on the 5 per cent (or less) of records in a government's holdings which have permanent value rather than passively on approving for destruction the 95 per cent without continuing value. The reorientation of an archivist's work from "a negative disposal principle" to one of "positive selection" is necessitated by the volume and character of modern records.[7] This new approach is especially important when dealing with the enormous bulk of records containing personal information.

8. There are other conceptual issues affecting appraisal theory which are outside the scope of this study of appraising records containing personal information, but which archivists should also consider within the context of their own national and institutional situations. In addition to appraising particular series of records to decide which to keep or destroy, according to traditional archival selection criteria (see section 2 above), archivists must incorporate institutional acquisition policies and mandates into their appraisal framework, as these will also define (and usually narrow) the field from which records can be acquired. Very often, too, these policies will reflect the political pressures (mentioned earlier) under which archivists may well find themselves. There is, in short, a need to reconcile records evaluation criteria and institutional policy when developing an acquisition strategy. Naturally, institutional jurisdictions will vary from country to country in forming or balancing this equation.[8]

9. A very promising conceptual approach to appraisal is the "documentation strategy" which has been articulated in recent years in the United States. It argues that appraisal must transcend (although also incorporate) records evaluation criteria and individual archival institutions' acquisition

policies to become a multi-institutional approach that combines many archives' activities in order to document the main themes in society. The documentation strategy integrates in its analysis both official government and other institutional records with private manuscripts and special graphic material, as well as published information. Its focus is not in the first instance provenancial, but on themes (or more properly societal functions) such as educating college students or developing the computer industry, or, as an alternative, on a very limited geographical area, but documenting therein many themes. It has been rightly noted that "the documentation strategy is intended to supplement rather than replace traditional methods of appraisal" and that it "is not a synonym for all archival appraisal, although unfortunately it has fallen prey to just such use." The documentation strategy is thus well beyond the scope of this study of appraising records containing personal information generated by government institutions. The documentation strategy also carries with it, unless applied on a very narrow and local basis, the threat of enormous overlapping of themes or functions and thus the real possibility of duplication of archivists' research work and record acquisition. In many ways, it is most appropriate for the world of private manuscripts rather than government or institutional records. Nevertheless, the new focus of the documentation strategy on "macro-appraisal" of first understanding societal functions before appraising particular groups of records, and basing such understanding on careful research and analysis, is complementary and analogous to the approach of this study.[9]

Towards A Model: Appraisal and Societal Dynamics

10. European archivists have advocated for a much longer period than their North American counterparts the need for the archivist to understand how society functions and how it creates records before one appraises the actual records themselves.[10] Societal dynamics should be a central concern in appraisal. While recognizing that the subjective and even artistic nature of appraisal cannot be eliminated, it is better in the European view for archivists to speculate less on possible uses for records tomorrow and to concentrate more on developing criteria to ensure that the records acquired reflect the values, patterns, and functions of the society contemporary to the records creators. This approach is not, however, to be confused with uncritical Hegelianism. Such patterns and functions should mirror the complex realities of actual society, rather than conform to some overarching ideology -- searching for and designating as archivally valuable only those records, for example, that demonstrate the paramountcy of dialectical materialism or free-market liberalism.[11]

11. Yet the problem remains that this full "reality" of society's patterns and functions (which the records should reflect) can never be objectively determined by historians, archivists, or even philosophers. How then can archivists chose a representative "slice of life" to reflect a reality that is unknowable? The answer lies in focusing less on that reality and more on the most essential ways and means in which that reality is formed. Through research and reflection, the archivist can determine where the best documentary evidence (as opposed to the historical truth) of that reality will most likely be found, and the central factors or players that shape that evidence. This approach has been defined in Germany as focusing on the "image" of society -- that is to say, not on the objective reality of society per sé, which can never be known absolutely, but rather on the mechanisms or loci in society where the citizen interacts with the state to produce the sharpest and clearest insights into societal dynamics and issues.[12] It is at these points that the best documentary evidence will be found. The culmination of that evidence, if chosen on this basis even by hundreds of archivists in scores of locations, will over time add up to a "reality" at the broadest levels of metahistory, myth, and social contract ideals -- even if no one archivist is ever able to perceive that "whole" reality as he or she works on its "parts." If the method for the part is sound, the whole will be reflected as a result. It must be stressed too, right at the start, that such insights from the "image" need not (and often will not) conform with the prevailing ideologies, practices, and institutions of the state; indeed, as will be seen, such insights are often most valuable where they vary from prevailing norms. Appraisal for each archivist thus consists of ensuring that the quality of the "image" reflected in records selected for archival retention is high. The rest of this chapter will explore the concept of the image and its role in shaping archival selection of personal information records.

12. It is essential to grasp this central notion of the "image." Image evokes perception, imitation, metaphor, mirror reflections. When one remarks of someone that "she is the image of her mother," one obviously does not mean that she **is** her mother in some objective reality, but rather that in key essential behaviour and fundamental appearances she reflects her mother's most important characteristics. So, too, is it with the institutions of the state. If not day to day or at any one moment frozen in time, the departments and agencies of government will over time reflect the "image" of society, that is, they will reflect the public hopes, aspirations, activities, and frustrations articulated by its citizens and that this reflection will be most evident where the citizen-state interaction is most vigorous. This does not suppose that this reflection or image is an objective reality of

society, but rather that it contains the most important characteristics and features of that reality. The image will be most sharply focused and most responsive to change in open, democratic societies, but in all societies the dynamic outlined here will gradually take hold.

13. It is not possible for archivists to discern the total, global "image" of society as a whole any more than it is possible to know the objective reality of society itself. Achieving that holistic image may be kept as an ideal, but not as a practical tool in working reality.[13] The global whole must remain a sensitivity in the archivist's consciousness, not a formal methodology. For one obvious thing, there is an inner side of human life relatively untouched by government functions and undocumented in government records, even in this era of the pervasive state and intensive citizen-state interaction. For another, there are people who slip through the cracks of society. In western countries, for example, the democratic consensus is often a white, male, capitalist one, and marginalized groups not forming part of that consensus or empowered by it are reflected palely (if at all) in the programmes and institutions of the state. Yet as will be seen, the voice of such marginalized groups may **only** be heard (and thus documented) -- aside from chance survival of scattered private papers -- through their interaction with the state, and thus the archivist must listen carefully to make sure these voices are heard.

14. But if this collective holistic image is too large for any one archivist to grasp, it does exist in reality; it is not an artificial construct or an idealistic leap of faith. The role of the archivist is to ensure not only that the "image" reflected in the records chosen for archival preservation is as accurate and inclusive as possible, but also to deal practically with smaller, discrete, manageable parts of that whole "image" rather than tilting at impossible windmills. In the case of records containing personal information, that "part" would be the departments and agencies of the state producing such records and reflecting that portion of the societal image formed by the citizen-state relationship as it relates to the function(s) of that agency. In this sense, the image of society is built **inductively** from actual human experience through the institutions (and thus records) which its citizens collectively create rather than **deductively** by adhering or conforming to either some unknowable abstract ideal or to the prevailing social doctrines of the state.[14] Consequently, the collective or holistic image will gradually be formed by assessing its parts, although assessment of the parts will naturally proceed in conformity with the then-known dimensions of the whole. Unlike the documentation strategy approach which first focuses on themes and functions, which are always in dispute regarding the number to be chosen, their

priority, and their extensive overlapping, the "image" approach advocated here has the added advantage of being provenancially rooted in the first instance in concrete, existing institutions and their records.

15. In an era when archivists will perforce be keeping a smaller and smaller percentage of the total mountain of information created -- and nowhere is this truer than for the voluminous case files containing personal information records -- the importance of convergence between the image of society and the accuracy of the reflection of that image in archival records increases accordingly. The archivist does not attempt to know or understand the image per sé -- that would require a lifetime of study, is philosophically impossible to attain, and would preclude any appraisal (or other work!) ever being completed. Rather, the archivist directs his or her research in this macro-appraisal model to identifying the mechanisms and locations (the how and where) of the image formation -- the key hubs or "hot spots" in the citizen-state interaction -- so that the best series may indeed be isolated and appraised.

16. The interaction of the citizen and the state, and thus records containing personal information which document that interaction, assume a large significance in this image. The central dialectic of society is the tension between leading ideological currents and the mass phenomenon of people's collective lives, which dialectic usually interacts most sharply through the agencies of the state. Virtually no aspect of human existence is untouched by this dialectic (that is, collectively in the image if not individually for each and every citizen). As noted in the first chapter of this study, people increasingly guard their rights, argue for better social, economic, and legal privileges, protest or support state actions across a dizzying spectrum of functions, and are taxed, counted, and recorded in a myriad of ways. They fill in forms, write letters, sign petitions, and are assessed and interviewed continually. The modern obsession with uncaring bureaucracies and "red tape" is evidence of the depth of this interaction and the resultant tensions. It is necessary, therefore, to turn in more detail to understand the nature of this interaction, the central factors or players affecting it, and the implications for appraising the records containing personal information which result from the interaction -- that is to say, the implications for sharpening the archivist's understanding of how and where the image of society is formed and thus for locating and focusing on the best documentary evidence of it.

An Appraisal Model for the Citizen-State Interaction

17. There are three factors which define the citizen-state interaction: the programme, the agency, and the citizen.[15] From this interaction is created the records containing personal information which the archivist must appraise. Taking these three factors in turn and exploring the key variables of each, many of which will refer back to the physical and context typologies for personal information records outlined in Chapter 2, the following sections will suggest a "macro-appraisal" approach suitable for selecting such records. This explanation of the interaction of the programme, agency, and citizen will demonstrate that the mechanics or location or nature of the formation of the image of society which the archivist must consider varies widely from one set of citizen-state interactions to any other, and thus from one series to another of the resultant personal information records. Depending on the type of variation involved, the records have greater or less permanent value.

18. The Programme. The programme is the purpose, intent, idea, even the theory or ideology, behind a particular government function. It is articulated through laws, regulations, directives and guidelines, operational procedural manuals, and published mandate statements, as well as in parliamentary debates and certain media commentaries. The programme encompasses more than just political ideology and party policies; it extends to the intellectual intent of government employees by which that ideology and those policies are interpreted and modified in the working practice of government administration. The importance of the programme depends on its impact on society, which is determined in part by its continuity, permanence, size and coverage of the population affected, and relevance to major social problems or higher policy issues, as well as the degree of change and impact in comparison with similar programmes. There is, nevertheless, the central idea of a programme being a prompt or agent or mirror of social change. If archivists were only documenting the programme per sé, then acquiring the records mentioned above (laws, regulations, procedures, manuals, and so on) in conjunction with all related policy files and major subject files would be sufficient. No archivist should document the programme itself through personal information case files found in such great numbers at the bottom of the information pyramid.

19. But it is never that easy. The intent of the programme is not always realized in practice. There is often a large gap between the intention and formal articulation of a programme and how it was actually operating in practice. The greater this gap, the more significant are the related records containing personal information.[16] For controversial

programmes such as medical aid for abortions in some countries or admission standards for "economic" refugees in others, the gap between the target of the government's policy or programme and its result is obvious to all, and widely and often hotly debated. In such controversial areas, every single individual case file (whether a medical consultation with a pregnant woman or an appeal hearing for an illegal immigrant) will contain vestiges of these wider conflicts between the theory and ideology of the programme on the one hand and its practice and reception (itself not devoid of ideological factors) on the other. (As will be seen, that does **not** mean each such file must be retained by an archives!) Even in less controversial areas, such as the payment of income tax, there are fixed regulations and then there is the working reality of most taxpayers twisting the rules to their own advantage. Yet even here, there is an unwritten understanding by the state **and** by the citizen of the difference between shaving the tax collector to "even things up" and criminal tax fraud. Nevertheless, in such ways, the actual programme is de facto modified; the sharpest "image" of society will be found at those points where such modification is most acute.

20. In considering a programme, there is also a negative side, where the failure of a programme may also reflect or demonstrate an important social reality, in that the projected citizens did not participate at all or as planned. Even a programme without a major impact on society reflects in its intent a predominant mentalité or ideology or intellectual/philosophical/cultural paradigm, and thus it may have significance as well. For such failed programmes, there may be far fewer traces in the subject files, and thus the reasons for the failure or non-compliance may only be evident in the case files.

21. The gap between the target and result of a programme depends on numerous factors, some of which are present in the wider society, some involve as will be seen the nature of the agency and the citizen, and others are inherent in the nature of the programme itself. For the latter, does the programme consist of "hard rules" rigidly applied or is it "softer," allowing discretion and flexibility? Does the programme allow the citizen (as much as the agency official) discretion for qualitative input and interaction? Is participation required by law or voluntary in nature? What is the source of the programme's information: directly from the citizen or indirectly gathered, and was that gathering operation overt or covert? Is the programme designed for direct or indirect delivery: if indirect, then the personal information records of the direct programme will be more significant than the indirect ones (block housing or medical research grants from the federal government to provinces or states, which then administer them in turn directly to local homeowners or

doctors: in such a case, the latter record will be more valuable for documenting the citizen-state interaction).

22. In terms of archival appraisal concerning these programme variables, although more will be said later, the greater the discretion and variation a programme allows, the greater likelihood that the personal case files generated by the programme will have the potential to focus more clearly the societal image that is not reflected in policy and subject files or in the actual documents which define the programme itself (laws, directives, and so on). Of course, this is **only** important for appraisal for those programmes which have a significant impact on society **and** which have targets and goals which are often changed, modified, or abandoned -- thus indicating that for this programme the dialectic of citizens' interaction with the state was having a concrete influence. This "image" factor concerning the programme **must** be present for the archivist to assess the personal case files involved as having permanent value. Simply because a programme was flexible does not, therefore, automatically render its records archivally valuable.[17]

23. The Agency. The sharpness of the "image" is affected by more than bias or flexibility in the programme involved. Government agencies also have biases. If the word "programme" refers to ideology and general intellectual intent in the broad sense, "agency" refers to the administrative structures (including the administrators) created by the state to implement or realize that ideology or programme. Government organizations consist of human beings who have their own loyalties, prejudices, and ideologies, and these are not always consistent with the official policies and stated goals of the government. The anti-democratic orientation of the public servants in the German Weimar Republic is a well-known example, as is the pro-Liberal leanings of the Canadian administration after 1957 during the first Conservative government in twenty-two years. Sophisticated programmes may be undermined, accelerated, delayed, or even paralyzed if faced with consistent opposition by public officials in organizations whose culture allows significant discretionary latitude to staff. In this regard, by analyzing decision-making processes, hiring and promotion practices for staff, the nature of the administration (professional, clerical, technical), and internal hierarchies and organization, the archivist can determine the type of ethos or operating culture that the agency exhibits. Is it essentially negative (strictly interpreting "hard" fixed rules, such as many taxation or pension or unemployment insurance agencies), positive (actively encouraging socio-economic development with "soft" rules allowing flexibility and discretion, such as many regional development or cultural agencies), or more neutral

(investigating and essentially fact-gathering, such as statistics agencies)? These three types of ethos are not more or less important for archival appraisal, but they do help in determining whether the case files of such an agency will demonstrate significant variation away from the official programme or policy, depending on whether a greater degree of initiative, interpretation, discrimination, and discretion is allowed by the agency for its officials and administrators. The existence of bias in public servants for personal factors must also be considered, such as career aggrandizement, promotion opportunities, or preference for or discrimination against citizens based on race, colour, tribe, religion, and gender. Insofar as these factors exist in an agency to a significant degree, then the possibility exists of variance (which will be reflected in the individual case files of the agency) from the official programme.

24. There are other factors concerning the agency which are important.[18] In terms of the actual programme, is it the primary or a secondary or auxiliary function of the agency? Is the agency the prime mover for the programme compared to other agencies (four major Canadian government departments created case files concerning grants to citizens for home insulation during the energy crisis years)? How decentralized is the agency and at what level of the hierarchy does the key citizen-agency interaction take place? What level has more discretion in the application of policy and guidelines? In Canada, for example, it is possible for an immigrant to go through more than a dozen separate levels of bureaucracy, including various hearing and appeals boards on up to the minister's office; it is obviously essential for the archivist to understand how the agency operates at each level and the relationships between the levels in order to locate the key decision-making area(s). Finally, the degree to which the agency adds information (perhaps unknown to the citizen) to input already received from the citizen -- doing credit, criminal, or other reference checks to add to personnel records, for example -- must be analyzed as well. The general rule for these agency factors is that the narrower and less flexible the range of interaction between the citizen and the administrator (or agency), the less significance the personal information case files will have in focusing the societal image (or that portion involving citizen-state interactions).

25. The agency also has a large impact on the organization and structure of records and records-keeping systems. Understanding the nature of the medium behind the message is essential, for the quality of the image reflected by the records is always shaped and often distorted by the limitations of various records systems. Thus the practices of the agency in this regard must be thoroughly researched, so that the nature and significance of the physical and con-text

typologies of the actual personal information record --how it is created, filed, indexed -- can be determined. These records systems, as noted in Chapter 2, may by their very structure increase or decrease the distance between the citizen on the one hand and the agency and programme on the other. To return to the example of the Canadian immigration agency, while an immigrant exhausting every avenue of appeal could interact with over a dozen separate administrative entities, many of these share the same individual case file: they add information to the file and then pass it up or down the hierarchy for future action and thus the addition of further documentation. In such a case, the distance of the different entities from the citizen -- some are very approachable, others are very remote and difficult to approach -- is rendered less significant to the archivist appraising the personal informa-tion record, since the case file involved will reflect the citizen-state interaction at all (or most) of the levels. Obviously, in agencies where each level of the bureaucracy maintained its own case file, the opposite would be true. And whether there is one or many files created on an individual's interaction with the agency, archivists must also determine whether files which transcend the routine to become controversial or precedent-setting are handled in some special way in the agency's records system: filed separately, coded or coloured or annotated differently, or key information abstracted or indexed elsewhere. In this and other ways outlined in Chapter 2, therefore, the agency's role in creating and maintaining records has an indirect but significant impact on the nature of the image of the citizen's interaction with the state.

26. In trying to document the agency per sé and how it functions, the archivist will research and often acquire organization charts, programme information (the mandate statements, procedural manuals, internal regulations, and so on noted in section 18 above), annual reports, forms management records and examples, records classification guides, internal histories, and personnel information (regarding training, promotion, career profiles, and so on). Again, some of this information will be located on policy and subject files. However, as one commentator has correctly observed,[19] agency information is now so widely available in published form and in central agencies' records (budgets, audits, statistical profiles, investigative reports, public hearings) that archivists in an age of information overload should be extremely selective concerning how many records they acquire from each individual agency solely to show how it operated (the evidential value of records). If that is true of policy and subject files, it follows that personal information case files as a general rule should not be acquired **solely** for their evidential value (beyond a very small example or sample to demonstrate the types of forms and procedures used, where

these are significant and cannot be documented in any other way). In summary, these agency factors are not to be used by the archivist to determine whether records containing personal information can be used to document the history of the agency itself, but rather to indicate the susceptibility of the agency through its internal ethos to affect significantly the dialectic of citizen and state, and thus sharpen the resultant societal image.

27. *The Citizen*. The importance of the citizen in the citizen-state interaction and in the resultant records containing personal information should be obvious, although it is too often overlooked by archivists and therefore researchers.[20] Furthermore, in that the historical significance of the agency and of the programme is best documented, as noted above, through other sources, personal information case files have their main archival significance as they reflect the attitudes and behaviour of the individual citizens covered by the records, and not on how they reveal the nature of government operations per sé.

28. Here it is important to consider both the quantity of information produced (whether under compulsory or voluntary participation -- which is a programme issue per sé) as well as its quality: its completeness and accuracy, the mental distance of the citizen from the actual programme (the further away, the more significant), and the length of time of the citizen's interaction with the agency (the one-shot application *versus* a continuing function, such as medical or police records). Is the citizen's input self-created (by the person directly, or indirectly through a mediator/translator/form-filler/lawyer) or does the agency create the record (known or unknown to the citizen)? Do the transactions in which the citizen is involved permit in this input the expression of opinions and emotions through free prose (individual letters or extensive "comments" spaces on forms) or only through filling in predefined boxes and checking-off given choices? If the administrator records the views of the same citizen instead (or as well), the same questions apply, but here the "free prose" must also be analyzed to see if regular stereotypes or repetitive model paragraphs are used rather than more original, expressive prose to reflect the views of the citizen. And in all this, how many of the ideas, emotions, and opinions of the citizen are found in the records in contrast to those which really document the programme or the agency? Does the citizen **consciously** interact with the agency and programme and have room for intervention, discretion, and influence on the decisions made? The records' significance will also depend on the degree to which the citizen is predisposed to be accurate and complete, and the competence of the citizen to present his or her views accurately and completely. Of

course, the opposite can be true as well, where, because some citizens may believe a particular programme to be wrong or unfair, they deliberately seek to undermine it by being inaccurate and incomplete in the information they provide. Finally, the distance of the communication from the subject must be weighed: expressing views on oneself, or on a family member, or on a neighbour, or on a casual acquaintance -- to cite four degrees of remoteness -- clearly decreases objective accuracy as distance increases, although not necessarily archival importance.

29. Appraisal Significance of this Model. Although the programme, the agency, and the citizen have been handled separately in the foregoing paragraphs, and archivists will probably analyze these factors separately as they do their research, all three factors must be combined at the stage of appraisal decision. **The records containing personal information resulting from the citizen-state interaction are important for documenting that interaction per sé, and not for documenting the programme or the agency or the citizen separately.** As mentioned, there are better and less bulky sources to do the latter without resorting to acquiring individual case files. It is at the centre of this theoretical model, however, as programme, agency, and citizen interact, that the essential dialectic takes place -- in the interaction itself, not in its three separate components. It is here that the image is sharpest. This does not mean that all images reflected in individual case files formed at that juncture or interaction point are significant. Some are rather commonplace; many are excessively routine. Some will adhere closely to or reflect the articulated programme and agency goals and mandates. Some while significant can be documented through less voluminous sources. But where other sources cannot clarify the image sufficiently, or where the programme's targets and actual results differ substantially, or where the events are so momentous in the eyes of contemporaries (Holocaust activities, refugee quotas, for example) that greater detail in clarifying the image is desirable, or where marginalized groups find a voice (even if reflected through others only faintly), then the case file records generated at that point of interaction **may** have potential permanent value. The important variables in the three components of the model which transform that potential into actual value depend entirely, as mentioned above in several contexts, on the flexibility and discretion allowed through the programme and in the agency for its citizens to express their opinions and reflect their activities in an honest rather than in a stilted or distorted or indirect manner.

Conclusion

30. There are other factors, as will be seen in the next chapter, which can refine and indeed reverse an initially positive appraisal decision made by using this model concerning records containing personal information. As noted before, however, such "traditional" appraisal criteria come **after** the application of the "macro-appraisal" based on the model of the citizen-state interaction. That model is generic. It does not depend on particular functions -- immigration, law enforcement, or health care -- but rather is applicable to all functions and is an appraisal framework that should be applied before the specific functions are assessed. Furthermore, this approach does not explicitly search for values in the records per sé -- whether evidential or informational -- but rather how accurately the records project and sharpen the image of the citizen-state dialectic. That will naturally include evidential and informational values, but combine and in a way transcend them.

31. This theoretical approach is, in short, a means around a hopeless dilemma faced by archivists the world over: appraisal cannot occur properly unless the archivist can comprehend the entire information universe of government records **and** divine all the key themes, movements, and people in society, a requirement that is clearly impossible to achieve. This model gives a point of attack, and a rationale for it. By accepting the model of the citizen-state dialectic, the archivist can focus with confidence on a manageable part of the whole, without having to know the whole universe. He or she concentrates at the level of the personal information record on looking for evidence of significant changes, variations, and distortions between targets and results. It is at such points that the image of society is sharpest. The archivist's appraisal responsibility is to ensure that the quality of the image is high in those personal information records selected for permanent retention. It is worth repeating again that there is no implication here that such records form the entire image. As will be seen, other kinds of archival records and many other heritage and artistic artifacts also have their role. This model concerns only that portion of the image reflected in the personal information case files created during the citizen-state interaction.

Notes

1. As will be seen in this and the next chapter, not all aspects of traditional appraisal should be applied -- they are stated here for sake of argument and familiarity. Considering potential uses

of records, for example, seriously distorts appraisal, while several other issues relate to the preservation and accessibility of the records, not in the first instance to their appraisal.

2. See above Chapter 1, section 12, and especially the footnote references to Berner and Ham.

3. For an early statement of this position, see Terry Cook, "The Tyranny of the Medium: A Comment on 'Total Archives,'" Archivaria 9 (Winter 1979-80), pp. 141-50. This generated a debate, summarized and culminating in Terry Cook, "Media Myopia," Archivaria 12 (Summer 1981), pp. 146-57.

4. My thinking is this regard has been much influenced by David Bearman, who once told me that the best means to approach appraising or describing records was to "put a bag over the records," not look at them, and focus on the functions and mandates of the records creator. See also his presentation (soon to be published) on "Multi-Sensory Data and Its Management," paper given at the Symposium on Current Records, International Council on Archives, Ottawa, Canada, 15-19 May 1989; and David Bearman and Richard Lytle, "The Power of the Principle of Provenance," Archivaria 21 (Winter 1985-86), pp. 14-27. While Bearman's insights often derive explicitly from a discussion of archival description, their application to appraisal is obvious. I have stated this in more detail in Terry Cook, "Leaving Safe and Accustomed Ground: Ideas for Archivists," Archivaria 23 (Winter 1986-87), pp. 124-25.

5. Compare David Klaassen's important assertion that "an archivist must begin by conceptualizing a universe consisting of the written records generated or accumulated **by** the participants and observers of the defined field. Put another way, the question 'what has been written?' must be preceded by 'who would have had reason to write by virtue of involvement in the field?'" (For government records, in place of "field," one could substitute a "defined agency or programme.") By contrast, librarians are concerned with what is written **about** a programme, rather than what was created **by** participants (i.e., records creators) in the programme. See David J. Klaassen, "Achieving Balanced Documentation: Social Services from a Consumer Perspective," The Midwestern Archivist 11 (1986), p. 116.

6. For early calls for such an approach, see Terry Cook, "From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives," Archivaria 19 (Winter 1984-85), pp. 40-42, and passim; Tom Nesmith, "The Archival Perspective," Archivaria 22 (Summer 1986), pp. 10-11; and Barbara L. Craig, "Meeting the Future by Returning to the Past: A Commentary on Hugh Taylor's Transformations," Archivaria 25 (Winter 1987-88), pp. 7-11. In the same research tradition but from another perspective, the attempt to revive in North America the centuries-old auxiliary historical science of diplomatics, shorn of history and updated and applied to archives,

brings the complex richness of diplomatic research, directly and by analogy, to modern archival functions; see Luciana Duranti, "Diplomatics: New Uses for an Old Science," Archivaria 28 (Summer 1988), especially pp. 7-11. Hugh Taylor, in his usual imaginative way, pushes the borders of archival research even further, to ask archivists to consider research into communications theory and technology as part of their work; among several recent pieces, see for example "'My Very Act and Deed': Some Reflections on the Role of Textual Records in the Conduct of Affairs," American Archivist 51 (Fall 1988), pp. 456-69. Finally, the entire Winter-Spring 1988 double issue of the American Archivist (Vol. 51) deals with establishing a research agenda for archivists across all archival functions; for appraisal, see Richard J. Cox and Helen W. Samuels, "The Archivist's First Responsibility: A Research Agenda to Improve the Identification and Retention of Records of Enduring Value," pp. 28-42, and the commentaries which follow by Frank Boles and Frank J. Burke.

7. See Hans Booms, "Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources," Archivaria 24 (Summer 1987), pp. 95, and passim (this is a translation by Hermina Joldersma and Richard Klumpenhouwer (who provide a brief introduction) of Booms' 1972 original article, published in Archivalische Zeitschrift, Vol. 68).

8. The point is well made in Frank Boles, "Mix Two Parts Interest to One Part Information and Appraise Until Done: Understanding Contemporary Record Selection Processes," American Archivist 50 (Summer 1987), pp. 356-68.

9. The original statement is Helen Willa Samuels, "Who Controls The Past," American Archivist 49 (Spring 1986), pp. 109-24. The article by Samuels and Cox cited above in note 6 ("Archivist's First Responsibility") is an updated general view, and its footnotes contain useful additional references. See especially Larry Hackman and Joan Warnow-Blewett, "The Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and a Case Study," American Archivist 50 (Winter 1987), pp. 12-47; and Richard J. Cox, "A Documentation Strategy Case Study: Western New York," American Archivist 52 (Spring 1989), pp. 192-200, from which the citations in the text are taken (p. 193).

10. The most important statement (from 1972 originally, and reflecting in its text and notes the debate in Europe at that time) is Booms, "Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage," Archivaria, pp. 69-107. This is a brilliant theoretical conceptualization of the archivist's role in society. In my opinion, no one has written as deeply about the philosophical and even moral position of the archivist.

11. Ibid. Booms makes the point in his critique of the Marxist orientation of archival appraisal practices in East Germany.

12. The term and argument is that of Siegfried Büttner, and is used throughout his background paper prepared for this study ("The Appraisal of Public Records Containing Personal Data: An Essay on an Unsolved Problem"); for more details about this paper and my debt to it, see my Foreword. The metaphor of the mirror image of society has appealed to others who have complained about the inadequacy of traditional appraisal: see F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge," in Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., _A Modern Archives Reader_ (Washington, 1984), pp. 334-35; and Cook, "Leaving Safe and Accustomed Ground," _Archivaria_, pp. 124-25.

13. In an analogous way, the American documentation strategy focuses inductively on specific themes and small geographical areas, rather than attempting to isolate and document as one single exercise every conceivable theme and function for the entire United States (or world?). As noted in 3.14 below, this results from a certain conceptual weakness in the approach itself.

14. It is recognized that this operates with greater subtlety than indicated here in the text. While citizens indeed create records, either directly or indirectly, they only create institutions indirectly. New institutions, or more likely new programmes within older agencies at first, take time to develop. Similarly, older institutions may still exist long after the need for them has diminished, and thus their dead hand from the past can blur present realities. These time lags and societal filters distort, but do not undermine the dialectic proposed here. Similarly, as will be seen, the records themselves can be merged, discarded, amended, or reclassified, thus altering the evidence of the citizen's intended or original interaction with the state. Naturally, the archivist must be aware of and account for these distortions in making appraisal judgements, and does so by exacting research into the history of records and records creators.

15. The model is outlined in Wolfgang Bick and Paul Müller, "Sozialwissenschaftliche Datenkunde für prozess-produzierte Daten: Entstehungsbedingungen und Indikatorenqualität," in Wolfgang Bick, Reinhard Mann, and Paul Müller, eds., _Sozialforschung und Verwaltungsdaten_ (Stuttgart, 1984), p. 123 ff.

16. One reader of the draft manuscript thought that exploring this distinction (as the following paragraphs suggest) improperly transforms the archivist into a social historian. I want, therefore, to be clear on this point, and on my intention. I am arguing that all archivists in their appraisal work should do research into the functions and mandates of the records creators and the history, evolution, and intent of programmes those creators put in place; archivists should interview primary record users on these points; and they should attempt to assess the importance of the programme, whether it was perceived by its creators as a success or failure, and how it had to be modified over time. It is from such research, after all, that archivists determines which

records are more or less important, or have "value" during the appraisal process. That process involves making judgements all the time about the importance and effectiveness of a programme and its records, and such judgements to me are at the centre of any notion of archival appraisal. That is quite different, however, from trying to place the **content** of the records against broader societal trends and patterns, which is indeed the role of the historian and other researchers.

17. Again, as throughout this chapter, it is necessary to stress that such a generalization refers only to those series of case files being assessed for their collective significance or evidential value. As noted at the end of Chapter 2, series of files having no impact on the concept of "image" may still contain informational value of use to genealogists or local historians.

18. An excellent guide to some of the factors archivists should consider in understanding how an agency functions and how it makes decisions is Michael A. Lutzker, "Max Weber and the Analysis of Modern Bureaucratic Organization: Notes Toward a Theory of Appraisal," American Archivist, 45 (Spring 1982), pp. 119-30.

19. F. Gerald Ham, "Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance," in Nancy E. Peace, ed., Archival Choices (Lexington, 1984), p. 137.

20. See Klaassen, "Achieving Balanced Documentation," The Midwestern Archivist, pp. 111-24, especially pp. 118-19. He uses "consumer" as in the consumer or user or client of the social service programmes he discusses.

4. APPRAISAL METHODOLOGIES, CRITERIA, AND OPTIONS

Introduction

1. This chapter will outline methods and criteria, as well as practical approaches, that an archivist should use in appraising records containing personal information. Such appraisal operates on two levels:

   -- for the large majority of case file series which have value primarily for their collective or evidential character (and thus have been identified for further appraisal using the macro-appraisal model in Chapter 3); and

   -- for those series which only contain certain informational value about specific persons, places, and things.

   The chapter begins by recommending a comprehensive approach as the only logical way to make sound appraisal decisions. This is followed by general and specific appraisal criteria, the latter both for special files in a series (informational value) and for series as a whole (evidential value, leading to the broader sharpening of the societal image). Various practical and preservation issues are next addressed, and then various appraisal options, including a brief summary of sampling, are presented.

The Comprehensive Appraisal Method

2. Archivists should appraise series of records containing personal information as part of a larger information universe.[1] Not to do so is to start at the bottom of the records pyramid with the most voluminous and repetitive records having the least value, rather than at the top with the policy files and then in the middle with subject files. The archivist must consider the value of records created by the formulation of policy and then those resulting from its general operations, interpretation, and modifications (as revealed in policy and subject records). before being able to understand and appraise correctly the records generated by the daily implementation of the policy (as revealed by the case files). When dealing with the case files themselves, the archivist should consider first the societal image model, and then later issues of informational value separate from the collective and evidential value of the series.

3. As indicated in Chapter 3, moreover, records containing personal information must by definition be appraised against a wider background, especially where such records have their principal significance because for a given function they enrich the image of the citizen-state interaction. That image will be sharpest, and thus most worthy of documentation by the archivist, where there is evidence of significant changes, variations, and distortions between targets and results of the given programme and where the agency allows the citizen sufficient latitude to express his or her opinions.[2] Thus, ipso facto, the archivist must determine the operating culture of that programme and agency by looking first at the sources which reveal it:

-- policy and subject files whose importance to the image was explained in the last chapter;

-- electronic records which aggregate much more precisely the more amorphous information from the case files and make clear the relevant demographic and statistical patterns;

-- central government sources (budgets, audits, inquiries, reports, and so on);

-- procedural and forms manuals;

-- legislation; and

-- related published and near-published information.

After determining which policy and subject records and which electronic data bases will be preserved by the archives, as well as the availability of other relevant (but non-archival) information, only then will the archivist be able to assess both the sharpness of the image in the citizen-state interaction **and** the value of the connected case records containing personal information. Finally, as noted, if the case file series do not have value in sharpening the collective societal image, they should still be appraised, as a last step, for the informational value they may have about specific individuals and events and places. In this comprehensive approach, therefore, actually looking at the records containing personal information is, ironically, the last rather than the first step in appraising such records. To look at personal information case files in isolation from these other factors and these other records is a prescription for poor archival appraisal.

4. The implementation of this comprehensive appraisal framework may conflict, however, with the priorities of government agencies in scheduling their own records. The records

schedule is a timetable created by a records manager indicating how long files or groups of files should be retained, where they should be retained (agency or records centre), and their ultimate disposition (transfer to an archives or destruction). If archivists can record their appraisal decisions onto records schedules as part of the process whereby those schedules are approved, the result is a more efficient and economical disposal process, reducing considerably the work of archivists and ensuring in all likelihood that valuable records are not lost or inadvertently destroyed. In this process, it has traditionally been the case that all relevant records in all media for a particular programme or administrative sub-unit are not be scheduled comprehensively by the agency, although that is desirable and should be encouraged. Usually, however, the bulky records containing personal information, which often have the shortest retention periods, will be scheduled first, simply because the agency does not want the high storage costs of maintaining them for long periods of time. But that does not mean that these records must be appraised first in isolation: the schedule is merely a tool to record an appraisal decision, among its other functions. The archivist should thus appraise in the comprehensive context (as outlined above) all the series and media of records created in a particular office relevant to assessing the image model, even if only a small portion of the records are being formally scheduled at any one time.

5. In the same comprehensive approach to their work, archivists should consider adopting the "cluster concept" when they appraise records. If there are several interrelated series of personal information records -- military records involving individuals might include the personnel file, court martial files, burial files, and so on -- these should be appraised together so that overlapping information may be more readily identified and thus a better appraisal made. The same clustering occurs in immigration and naturalization files and in certain court records.[3]

6. The timing of the appraisal of series of case files or similar personal information records will vary. For the essential records category, the decision can be made immediately. For more routine and homogeneous series, in a manner similar to appraising electronic records at the system design stage, the records may be appraised as (or even before) they are first created. Here a diplomatic analysis is necessary to understand the form and process and structure behind the records per sé, which in turn will reveal much about the informational content before the records are even created. In such cases, archivists must monitor the situation periodically to decide if changes in the programme, agency, or records structures over time require a revised appraisal. But for

most series containing personal information case files, the issue of retention will revolve around whether the records reflect a societal image which distorts, alters, or negates an articulated intent of the programme or agency. Almost by definition, such cases will involve public issues or government functions which are controversial, hotly debated in public forums, and emotion-laden for many citizens (including archivists) at the time of their occurrence. In such cases, distance adds needed perspective to the appraisal decision. That time can be gained by storing records for periods of infrequent use in records centres, but archivists must guard against excessive use of this strategy in order to avoid filling centres with useless records with ever-mounting storage costs. Records centre storage is not justified simply because records creators, records managers, and archivists refuse to make difficult decisions. Good archival research and analysis, however, will shorten the needed "cooling-off" period for records. Even if there is delay in making the actual appraisal until this perspective has been gained, the archivist should still gather relevant documentation and interview responsible departmental officers as soon as possible, before both disappear and important experience and impressions are lost.

7. The comprehensive approach to appraisal, as well as the reorientation of the archivist from passive receptor to active selector and the ideal timing of the appraisal, may sometimes be in conflict with the aims of records managers with whom the archivist must cooperate. All archivists have had the experience of roomsful of records dumped on them without warning, thus undermining any chance to treat such records comprehensively with the others in their information universe or actively in terms of isolating (according to Chapter 3) the key records worth preserving in order to retain the most faithful image of society. There is no easy solution to this dilemma, but since the volume of records ever increases, and as space and other resources diminish for both records managers in departments and archivists, it is mandatory that archivists break this vicious circle and regain control of the archival agenda. That may be done by implementing a planned, strategic approach to records scheduling with agencies, that is, a plan based on archival priorities derived from research into all the complex variables mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3, but which also recognizes the need of agencies to have authority (usually received from the national archivist in most countries) to destroy records without archival value in a timely fashion.

Appraising Case Files: General Working Rules

8. The main working rule for archivists in appraising all records is to destroy them.[5] On the standard 5 per cent : 95 per cent ratio of keep versus destroy -- which in many countries is closer to 2:98 or 1:99 -- "it is neither scientifically desirable nor economically defensible to spend most of our time and energy on minutely culling the larger mass of records".[6] If this is true for all records, then it is especially so for large series of case files containing personal information. The focus for the archivist should not be to explain what is being destroyed, but rather to advance "definite and compelling justifications" for what is being kept. Of that 5 per cent of paper records so selected, many will be policy or significant subject files, but a large volume may be textual case files in paper format (especially where there are strong pressures to save records for their informational values).[7]

9. Essential records containing personal information, as outlined in Chapter 2, sections 22 and 23, are not covered by these rules or by the theoretical considerations of Chapter 3. Such essential categories of records are not acquired by archives to sharpen the societal image (although they obviously contribute to it), but rather to provide a demographic profile of the nation, to protect citizens' rights, and to underpin certain judicial processes.

10. Personnel records similarly are acquired both in their own right for the evidential and informational value they have in isolation (see Chapter 2, sections 24 to 28), as well as for how they may contribute to the overall societal image.

11. Where the principal value of the important personal information records coming from the "macro-analysis" of the societal image is determined by the archivist to be collective and quantitative rather than personal and qualitative, the record should usually be kept in electronic rather than paper format, where both exist. The advantages of the machine-readable version of the record are numerous, in addition to obvious savings in space and storage costs: manipulability of the information, ease of anonymization permitting public access in light of tougher privacy laws, linkage to other data to create "new" information bases, and potential for aggregation and statistical analysis.[8] As noted before, this rule may apply to essential personal information records as well, and it does apply to personnel records series.

12. As outlined in the last chapter, records containing personal information should not be kept to document the historical significance of a programme or an agency per sé (as opposed to

the concept of sharpening the societal image). The only exception is that a small example of case files may sometimes be kept to demonstrate the forms used where the programme was of particular importance. Keeping large examples or more formal samples merely to show the processes of the agency or the nature of its daily operations is rarely justifiable. Information on processes and operations, as noted, is readily available elsewhere in the information universe and records hierarchy. This rule also includes attachments to or associated artifacts connected with case files, such as X-rays, fingerprints, weapons, blood samples, and so on.

13. The primary use of records must not be confused with their secondary, archival uses, although the nature of the primary use is clearly important to understanding the records' context during the appraisal process. Simply because a department has a long-term and sometimes even a permanent use for a record does not render such case files an archival record, unless they also have significance in terms of the societal model in Chapter 3 or of informational value for research. It may be that political pressure, as noted before, may in some countries require such records to be stored in the national archives, but that is a pragmatic decision, not one based on archival significance.

14. In addition to researching and understanding all the factors and variables outlined in the last two chapters, archivists must ensure that they do not give undue weight to various types of records. They cannot appraise a large series of case files by "spot-checking" or by accepting the word of the agency's officials that various records are duplicated in other series and/or in other levels of the administrative hierarchy. Archivists must approach the task more comprehensively and scientifically. In appraising 135,000 cubic feet of Department of Justice litigation case files in the United States, for example, archivists followed the department's own classification system to break the cases into 194 distinct categories (kidnapping to insurance fraud) and then used a consistent sampling methodology to select a balanced number of files from each category for study during the appraisal process. This is sampling for appraisal rather than for acquisition and transfer. As the number of cases ranged from over 10,000 in each of anti-trust, land, and taxation categories to under 10 for those relating to misuse of insignia, census violations, or farm loans, such scientific categorization and sampling is necessary in order to understand the nature of the records involved and to ensure that cases with few instances are not overlooked and those with many are not overemphasized. The Department of Justice methodology is not only directly relevant to the personal case file series of other judicial, court, police, and intelligence agencies, but also to any series which on the surface appears

to be homogeneous, but which in reality has various internal categories or functions.[9]

Appraising Case Files: Specific Criteria

15. There is no attempt in this section to write guidelines, complete with full argument and examples, concerning archival appraisal criteria in general.[10] Rather, only those factors affecting the appraisal of records containing personal information are summarized. If a series of case files **following** the "macro-appraisal" model is determined to have potential permanent value, **then** a secondary series of appraisal factors must thereafter be considered. As well, series which do not have such collective or evidential value in sharpening the image of society may still have informational value. The following paragraphs outline appraisal factors for both cases: identifying within a series the individual files that have particular significance (informational value) and dealing with all cases in the series as a collective reflection of the citizen-state interaction (the macro-appraisal model). The first involves pulling special cases away from the whole; the second involves sampling (where all files need not -- or cannot -- be kept) to ensure that the part retained in an archives is a valid representation or reflection of the whole.

16. Series as a Whole. Without denying the importance of the exceptional and controversial cases within a case file series, or the general informational value of the series, it is the series as a whole, as an aggregate of the citizen-state relationship, that should first draw the archivist's attention. In such cases, after determining that the series does indeed qualify as sharpening the image of society as outlined in Chapter 3, the archivist evaluating the series of records containing personal information must address a number of additional factors, which are common to all appraisal:

    a. Completeness of the series. The more complete a series is, including both successful and unsuccessful cases, regional and headquarters input, the greater its value.

    b. Authenticity. There must be assurance the records are genuine, created in the normal course of business under established procedures, and clearly linked by provenance to their creator.

    c. Uniqueness. Is the record physically duplicated in whole or large part in electronic, micrographic, or published form? Is significant information from it tabulated, summarized, or abstracted in policy and subject files, data bases, or publications? If so, as noted before, the paper version of the case file should rarely be acquired by an archives. If the record or information is unique, does it merely confirm impressions already recorded elsewhere, does it supplement what it known, or does it provide a fresh, untapped body of data?

d. Relationship to other records. If the records complement or extend the understanding or significance of other records in the archives' custody, their value increases. Similarly, the potential to link records or data between these and other records must be considered.

e. Dates and time-span. The earlier the date of the series, especially for pre-1945 case records when other personal information sources were less available, the more value the series may have. Similarly, for comparative and longitudinal studies, the longer period of time covered by a series of records containing personal information, the greater their value.

f. Extent. Obviously the overall existing volume of the series, and the annual rate of accumulation, must be considered.

g. Usability. The records must be legible, coherent, accompanied by relevant supporting documentation, and arranged or indexed in a manner rendering them usable by researchers, or have the potential to be made so.

h. Rigidity/Flexibility. As noted at length in Chapter 3, the series has greatest value if its structure (and the programme and agency behind it) allows information from citizens to be recorded directly rather than indirectly, in free prose rather than set forms, and reflecting views and opinions rather than merely the rigid application of fixed procedures.

17. It may be useful for archivists to consider drafting an appraisal checklist of questions when appraising records containing personal information. As noted before, this must be used after extensive research by the archivist into the history and character of the records and their creator and after undertaking the "macro-appraisal" outlined in Chapter 3. Naturally, the questions asked will vary from agency to agency in light of their particular mandates and functions. One such checklist, which includes most if not all of the above points, was produced from the National Archives and Records Administration's celebrated appraisal of the FBI case files, and it is reprinted in the Appendix to this study.

18. Finally, following from the insights of the documentation strategy, archivists faced with appraising large volumes of

records containing personal information should develop national networks to ensure that the records being appraised in their own jurisdictions, using the foregoing criteria, are indeed unique, and that the information in them is not reflected or even duplicated in similar records being retained in other archival repositories.[11] Extending the argument beyond the contents of other archives, archivists should remember that the societal image is reflected and preserved as well by librarians, museum and art gallery curators, historic site interpreters, recorders of oral history, and many other heritage professionals. The results of their work may well allow the archivist to destroy certain types of information rendered thereby less essential to the overall image. Such national networks will not be easy to establish nor will they always work harmoniously, but the need for them is apparent and the effort should be made.

19. Special Cases within a Series. There is no better way to introduce the appraisal of series for informational value than by quoting the admirable guidelines set forward in a National Archives and Records Administration handbook for appraising selected case files for permanent retention:

> Those chosen normally fall under one or more of the following categories. The case: a. Established a precedent and therefore resulted in a major policy or procedural change; b. Was involved in extensive litigation; c. Received wide-spread attention from the news media; d. Was widely recognized for its uniqueness by established authorities outside the Government; e. Was reviewed at length in the agency's annual report to the Congress; or f. Was selected to document agency procedures rather than to capture information relating to the subject of the individual file. Categories a. through e. establish the exceptional nature of a particular case file while category f. relates to routine files chosen because they exemplify the policies and procedures of the creating agency. The types of case files selected for permanent retention under the criteria established above include, but are not limited to, research grants awarded for studies; research and development projects; investigative, enforcement, and litigation case files; social service and welfare case files; labour relations case files; case files related to the development of natural resources and the preservation of historic studies [sites?]; public works case files; and Federal court case files.[12]

As noted earlier, category f. (evidential value) should only be used very sparingly for records containing personal information, and should never exceed a small sample. However, unless the creating agency is willing to code the files physically (numbering variation, colour tabs, a cover stamp or annotation) to indicate that any particular case file was indeed exceptional and falls into categories a. to e. above, there is little chance that the archivist will be able to isolate such files using these categories --especially if there are hundreds of thousands of file units.

20. There are three alternatives. One is to isolate important instances by date: military records during wartime years, immigration records during years of special migrations or forced evacuations, whether globally or by particular countries; all files created during the pioneering, early, or controversial periods of a particular programme. A second alternative, and one following the extended example of personnel case files cited in Chapter 2, is focusing on certain levels or categories of individuals, where such hierarchical organization exists and is easily evident in the filing system used for the records. A third and more assured alternative is concentrating on the "fat file" -- or the multi-section or multi-volume file.[13] As exceptional, unusual, or controversial cases almost by definition generate more correspondence than their routine counterparts, such files will be thick and thus easily identifiable even in vast series to be pulled for archival retention. Of course, not all thick files necessarily follow this pattern: it may be that someone was routinely repaying a loan in monthly payments over thirty years (thus generating a fat file of 360 receipts). The archivist will have to assess the **reasons** for the thickness of particular files in series where they occur to ensure that such files are indeed exceptional. It is also logical that such exceptional files may well contain all which the archivist feels is necessary to document the "hot spots" in the citizen-state dialectic. After all, such controversial and precedent-setting files by their nature represent the "image" forcing changes on the programme and agency intentions and targets (see systematic sampling in section 32 below). In certain situations, the archivist may also want to select for preservation a "normal" base of information against which these special and exceptional cases may be compared and contrasted by researchers.

Appraising Case Files: Practical and Preservation Issues

21. There are certain practical and preservation factors which may affect the ultimate decision to acquire a series of records containing personal information, or to acquire only part rather than all of it. The archivist must consider these

factors, but only **after** going through the four steps of researching and applying the "macro-appraisal," the comprehensive analysis, the general rules, and the specific criteria noted above. If after that process, the archivist has made a positive decision that the records containing personal information indeed have value and that some or all of them should be acquired, then the following issues must also be considered. These are not appraisal issues, however, but preservation ones. The distinction is subtle, and important. While these practical and preservation factors clearly affect the nature (and sometimes even the possibility) of the actual acquisition of the records, they do not affect per sé the intellectual decision of whether or not the records have permanent value. For example, the billions of bytes of climatic data received daily from hundreds of satellites and earth sensor stations have permanent value for long-term ecological study, but no archives is equipped to acquire them directly. Thus, such data are appraised as being permanently valuable, but practical or preservation issues prevent their actual transfer to an archives.

22. The most obvious practical factor is the cost of retaining the records. There are the obvious costs of the space needed to store the records and the containers and shelving to hold them. Less visible but equally pertinent costs concern the salary time and materials needed to arrange and describe the records, to preserve (and possibly copy) them, and to make them available to the public. In preserving the best possible record within budgetary limitations, many archives will find that they cannot keep all desirable series of case files and some hard choices will have to be made. If the foregoing analysis has been carefully researched and documented, and if it is sufficiently comprehensive across an agency (as defined in sections 2 to 7 in this chapter), then the priorities between competing series will be easier to identify for making that final decision.

23. There are sometimes legislative or statutory prohibitions which prevent archivists from viewing certain series of records in order to appraise them or which legally bar the transfer of certain categories of records to the archives, or both. In such cases, archivists (and their outside supporting communities) must lobby for legislative amendments or administrative arrangements to overcome these prohibitions. Ideally, archival legislation itself grants archivists the right to appraise and acquire even sensitive records.

24. Where the original paper records are too extensive, it is possible to convert the information, or the key portions of it, to electronic data, microfilm, or optical disk. Unless this conversion has been done by the creating agency, most archives will find that the conversion costs outweigh the

storage ones, and only a small portion of their holdings will be so treated. Even where microfilm or computer versions of the record are available, however, archivists are cautioned that such miniaturization is no substitute for sound appraisal. Keeping useless records, even those with modest space requirements, complicates description and research unnecessarily, and clutters the desired total image of society.

25. Certain practical considerations may affect the timing of the transfer of records containing personal information, although again this has little to do with appraisal as contrasted to acquisition. If records are still actively used in an agency or likely to be subject to many freedom of information or privacy requests, it may be desirable to extend their formal retention period and thus delay their transfer to the archives in order to avoid excessive reference workloads. Conversely, if the archivist fears that records are physically threatened with either outright destruction or rearrangement that would obliterate their original order, then the retention periods should be shortened and the records safeguarded in the archives as soon as possible. This second scenario occurs when records are highly sensitive or embarrassing to the government in power or where the agency is transitory in nature (an investigatory commission, a small bureau) and about to pass out of existence.

26. Another preservation strategy may be to share between several archives in a formal network (or even informally across national borders) a large series of records which is beyond the capacity of any one of them to retain as a whole. In Great Britain, for example, over 300,000 feet of shipping and seamen's records (as of 1954 only) were handled as follows: the Public Record Office kept all crew lists up to 1860 and a 10 per cent sample thereafter, together with the crew lists for certain well-known ships; a sample of the remaining lists for every tenth year was then preserved by the National Maritime Museum; certain crew lists were handed over to local archives (for ships registered at ports within the area); and the very large residue was transferred to the Atlantic Canada Shipping Project of Memorial University of Newfoundland.[14] While purists might argue about original order, or that this approach simply evades a tougher appraisal decision, researchers are pleased with this more generous solution which was beyond the capability of the Public Record Office itself.

27. Finally, as mentioned in Chapter 1, more restrictive privacy acts coming into force around the world place very tight restrictions on the release of records containing personal information to third parties. These acts can dictate that certain types of personal information not be collected at all or can require that records containing it be destroyed after

a short period of primary use, or can preclude transfer of such records to the archives (see legislative restraints above), or can make it impossible for researchers to use the records even if they are transferred. Archives must learn to live in this new environment by demonstrating to their sponsoring governments that they will follow the acts and not release personal information records in ways that will harm an individuals' rights to privacy. Archivists should also try to convince their sponsors and legislators that the sensitivity of personal information will eventually expire, and in such circumstances the personal information records can then be made available for public consultation. Therefore, such records should not now be destroyed merely to protect personal privacy. In such a manner, it is possible, as in the Canadian Privacy Act, to get specific exemptions for archival use of records containing personal information.[15] In a related vein, by keeping a citizen's sensitive file as part of a sample, especially depending on the political climate of the country, archives may actually disadvantage that citizen and leave him or her open to prosecution, public embarrassment, or worse. It is essential that records containing such highly sensitive personal information kept **solely** for their collective significance in a series not be made available through descriptive tools which allow retrieval by a personal identifier for any purpose, including genealogical research, during the person's lifetime. As well, care must be taken to store (and destroy, if relevant) such sensitive personal information in a secure manner.

Appraisal Options

28. After all the above analytical steps, the archivist is faced with making one of the following decisions:

    a. Retain all records permanently. Very few personal information records aside from the "essential" categories defined in Chapter 2 will be kept in their entirety. Perhaps a small series of case files in a programme where cases were appealed to and settled in the minister's office would be an example, or the examples cited before (see Chapter 2.30) of national gallery artist files or senior scientists' research grants. As a working rule in such cases, for interrelated series of records, it is preferable to keep all of a small series rather than samples from a much larger one.

    b. Remove and keep key documents only from the files. Immigration landing record forms or medical and employment history charts once removed from the case files render what remains behind unarchival. It is, however, a labour-intensive job to remove such documents for large series if this work is not already performed by the creating department in the course of its normal business. It is good records management practice (in which archivists have an obvious stake) to ensure that key forms can be readily separated from ephemeral material.

c. Sample the records. Sampling permits the retention of the characteristics of the whole, both physically and intellectually, in a small portion of the whole. See the special section on sampling which follows for more information.

d. Take an example of the records. This involves taking a very small specimen (a file or box per year perhaps) solely to show the forms and processes used. As noted, there are better ways to document the evidential value of a programme, and this method for voluminous records containing personal information should be used sparingly.

e. Destroy all the records. This will of course be the decision taken for most series of personal case files created by modern governments.

29. At any stage in this process, archivists can consider converting the records or key information in them to electronic, micrographic, or optical disk formats as an alternative to collecting extensive series of bulky paper records, or consider alienating the records to another repository, but as noted these are preservation options, not appraisal ones. The personal information records in such instances have already been appraised as having permanent value before the practical and preservation concerns of actual transfer and acquisition are considered.

Sampling: A Summary Profile

30. It is not the purpose of this study to investigate the various sampling methodologies in detail nor to review actual relevant sampling cases from archival practice. A RAMP study has been published on sampling and readers should consult it for more details and particular examples.[16] The aim here is merely to give a brief summary of sampling as an appraisal option for acquiring records containing personal information. Some will argue that only random or statistical sampling is true sampling and that the other means cited below are better termed selection. However, unlike the example, they all attempt to represent some or all of the characteristics of the whole (or of some feature of the whole) in the part chosen, and for this reason are here termed "sampling." While there

are many sampling methods, most usually fit into one (or a combination) of the following four categories.[17]

31. Statistical Sampling. Selection based on mathematical techniques that determine the proper number of cases (i.e., size of the sample) and the actual means of selecting specific cases necessary to preserve a "representative" (statistically valid) sample of the entire series. This is sometimes called probability sampling.

Example: Selection based on random number tables, or an automated random number generator, and then pulling the required files matching the randomly identified numbers. There are three types of statistical or random sampling: **simple random** (where the random numbers are applied blindly to the entire population, which sometimes means small pockets of files of a particular type may be missed entirely); **systematic random** (where the first number is chosen randomly, and then every nth number thereafter is chosen, which is particularly helpful for chronologically organized series and for avoiding the "missing pockets" syndrome); and **stratified random** (where the whole is broken down into logical parts -- like the categories in the United States Justice litigation case files cited above -- and then each part or office is randomly sampled, thus ensuring that no part is overlooked).[18]

Advantages: The sample can be used to reconstruct the whole and the results should be statistically valid. It is theoretically unbiased and thus easily explainable to researchers. For a numerical arrangement of files, it may be a relatively easy sample to pull by clerical staff. Finally, archivists can control the size of the sample, and normally it will be quite manageable, since even for large series, the proper statistical weight can be assigned, even when a relatively small sample is chosen (about a maximum of 1,500 total cases is NARA's experience out of **any** size series, whether from ten thousand or ten million cases).

Disadvantages: There is obviously little chance that the few exceptional or outstanding cases in the series will be included in the random or statistical sample, although this can be compensated for by using a second method (see below) to complement the random sample. As well, researchers cannot do longitudinal work; one cannot trace a county or individual over time, as the county or person in every likelihood will not be selected for every annual or decennial random sample from the series. For files arranged alphabetically or in some other non-numerical scheme, the statistical sample is very difficult to pull, as it will require the counting and often may require the costly numbering of all the files before pulling. And for complex file series, there may be the need for a stratified (i.e., multiple) sample to ensure that various types of actions are sampled; this is very expensive and requires great statistical expertise. A high level of analysis is also required to determine the homogeneity of the series and the nature of the features or characteristics within the files which must each be given statistical weight. Archivists naturally should not be afraid of complex analysis nor of acquiring new expertise, but only cautious that the time thus spent to determine these factors does not pass the point of diminishing returns. As well, in that the total information universe is rarely known to the archivist for large series of continuing files perhaps scattered in hundreds of field offices, it is somewhat difficult and always expensive to apply statistical sampling techniques: one can, of course, sample each office separately, or add up the total number of files in each office in order to determine the whole before beginning the random sample. More difficult to determine (and defend) is when to sample: every year and on what date in it?), every tenth year, every twenty-fifth, etc. Finally, and most problematic, for continuing series organized without logical cutoff points, which is the case for the majority of operational programmes, the open-ended nature of the records system means that the information universe is unknowable. The first files in the series will be ready for destruction or preservation long before the last file is even begun. An unknowable information universe renders impossible statistically valid sampling; only for closed or contained series is it relevant. Of course, the archivist may impose cut-off dates (in order to "close" an "open" series), or do statistical samples at certain time intervals on all closed volumes of files accumulated to that point. But with such tactics, the size of the total sample remains uncontrollable, and for the whole series (when it eventually stops) there is no assurance that the sum of the some twenty or fifty samples taken on parts of the series over the years is equal (and statistically valid) to the one hypothetical (but impossible to perform) sample of the entire series.

32. Systematic Sampling. Selection based on a physical characteristic of the records or filing scheme without regard to the substantive information in the selected files.

Examples: All files from years ending in "2" or for surnames beginning with "F"; every twentieth or nth file; every social insurance or identity number ending in "5"; all files measuring more than one inch thick or more than x volumes or sections in format (the so-called "fat file" method), which of course will vary from series to series as to what is "fat."

Advantages: The sample is relatively easy to pull, and does not require great expertise in the substantive content covered by the file. It can thus be pulled relatively inexpensively by clerks in records offices or records centres, rather than needing the direct (and costly) intervention of archivists or senior programme officials in departments with their knowledge of the substance of the files. As noted earlier (see 4.20 above), if using the "fat file" method, the chances are good that the archivist may get most of the real problem cases.

Disadvantages: This method is not statistically valid; it cannot be used to reconstruct the whole. It is difficult to explain to researchers (i.e., to justify saving years ending in "2" rather than "7," and so on). It is impossible to control the size of the sample (especially with the "fat file" method) and thus space planning is very difficult. And, quite evidently, this method (with the partial exception of the "fat file" approach) does not guarantee that the outstanding or controversial cases have been preserved.

Conversely, the fat file approach will likely result in preserving the cases which were the exception, not the rule.

33. Exemplary Sampling. Selection made on a qualitative basis to document some "typical" characteristic, activity, or time period.

Examples: All files from a particular region to show how a "typical" field office operated; or all files from the years immediately before and after an agency reorganization or significant legislative change to show their impact on actual operations; or all files for particular types of court proceedings (e.g., felony convictions); or all files for public servants reaching the rank of director or above. As another example, the archivist could also keep all series for many agencies for a very intensive geographical area (a small region or city) which is typical of the whole nation in order to take a snapshot of the societal image. The "fat file" may also be an exemplary sample, even though its physical characteristic places it first under the systematic sampling category (see 4.32 above). If the file is "fat" because some **consistent** characteristic or feature of the programme renders it so (rather than just its physical size), then if that feature or characteristic is the one the archivist deems worthy of preservation for qualitative rather than purely quantitative reasons, the fat file method is also an exemplary sample.

Advantages: The method can be justified to researchers, although with some difficulty, and it can be used to trace a programme over time.

Disadvantages: The method is not statistically valid and cannot be used to reconstruct the whole. It does not save the exceptional cases and again there is no control over the size of the sample. It does require substantive expertise to make the right choices, as "typicality" of the isolated feature or characteristic or the time period will always be open to dispute, and therefore will require the archivist's careful analysis and explanation.

34. Exceptional Sampling. Selection of files on significant individuals, precedent-setting programmes, and landmark cases.

Examples: Pulling of exceptional individual cases from a series follows different criteria in each case. However, there are several types of individuals to watch for and these were stated generally in section 4.19 above, and a particular example was given for personnel files in section 2.27 of how to isolate the famous, controversial, and "firsts" from the ordinary and routine cases. Once again, depending on the reasons for unusually large files, the "fat file" method for some series may also indicate exceptional, precedent-setting cases.

Advantages: This selection can be justified, although with some difficulty, as it usually saves the controversial files that often demanded by researchers.

Disadvantages: The method is obviously not statistically valid, and may give a false impression of what the original whole series was like (i.e., distort the view of a "typical" case). It requires great substantive expertise as well as relatively good prior identification and arrangement of files so that the exceptional cases can be located and pulled. It is very closely linked to current research trends, and therefore highly susceptible to bias. Again, the size of the sample cannot be controlled.

35. Stratified sampling uses the same sampling method to acquire two or more samples from the same series in order to protect different characteristics of the whole: lower courts and appeal courts; field and regional offices; different income levels; or whatever other strata into which it seems useful to divide the files.

36. The archivist can also combine two or more of the above methods, where appropriate. **If random or statistical sampling is one of the methods, it must of course be applied first so that the statistical validity of the whole is not impaired.** It may be desirable to use statistical or systematic sampling first, and then search for an exemplary or exceptional sample second.

Conclusion

37. Most appraisal decisions for series of records containing personal information will be complicated and stratified depending on the agency, the programme, its citizens, and the nature of the records. Here a concrete example might be

helpful for readers. To return to the Canadian immigration agency cited earlier in this report, the following appraisal decisions were made in late 1987 on a records schedule for the paper case files located in headquarters, regional offices, and field contact centres, as well as those in many appeal boards and tribunals.[19] Three other types of records were not covered by the schedule submitted by the agency, but these records were also considered in the appraisal decision in order to make a more comprehensive and accurate evaluation: the policy and subject files, the microfilmed landing record form for each immigrant, and the electronic demographic data on immigrants. Although there were subtle distinctions between the various levels of the hierarchy, in general the following records were identified for archival retention:

- all case files the surnames of whose subjects begin with the letter "F" (just under a 4 per cent sample of the series); as well as

- all "unusual, controversial, historic, or precedent-setting" cases as defined by the agency;

- all case files still surviving from before a significant cut-off date in the development of the automated systems and surviving electronic records in the agency (1969);

- all "fat files" (the dimensions of which were specified);

- all case files bearing a special "SF" prefix indicating a classification to the level of secret or marked "secret" (thus indicating special sensitivity in the eyes of the agency);

- all case files whose subjects launched appeals to very high levels or tribunals in the system;

- all case files for one ethnic group over an eight-decade period (which had survived intact in the agency);

- all case files bearing special prefixes ("H" for Hindu, etc.) that designated a particular ethnic group, or person from it, segregated from the main case file series; and

- all related indexes, registers, file classification manuals, and other similar finding aids.

The "F" letter was chosen because it was shown, after extensive study and computer analysis, to be one of the few letters inclusive of almost all ethnic groups' linguistic patterns for surnames. Because of the way the records are organized, numbered, and scattered, and because the series is open-ended and not closed, statistically valid random sampling was not considered possible. Recommended for destruction in this appraisal decision were over 95 per cent of the total files (i.e., those which were not in the "F" sample or the other much more limited categories), as well as virtually all files, which were very voluminous, relating to assisted passage and transportation loans or warrants (files prefixed "AP," "TL," or "W"). As well, it was recognized in preparing this appraisal that, as the National Archives of Canada gains better control over the electronic data bases of the immigration agency, several categories of records now scheduled for permanent retention in paper format may no longer be needed: the "F" sample and the single ethnic group, for example. As well, when overseas processes are better integrated electronically, the archival retention of related microfilmed records of overseas applications and cases from the records of the separate External Affairs agency of the Canadian government may also be discontinued. Appraisal must remain a dynamic process, ever changing as the circumstances of records creation and media transformation change.[20]

38. In conclusion, when appraising records containing personal information as defined in this study, the archivist must consider four factors in this order: researching and analyzing the "macro-appraisal" model of the societal "image"; utilizing the comprehensive approach to records assessment and scheduling; applying the general working rules and specific appraisal criteria; and tempering the decision, if at this point it is still positive, with whatever relevant practical, preservation, and political considerations may exist. In most cases, the latter will lead to some form of sampling as the best option.

Notes

1. An exception, as noted in Chapter 2, would be some of the essential categories of personal information records which archivists colectively should keep in every nation. As noted there, this is less an appraisal issue than one of preservation: which format and medium to keep, separating essential from supporting documents, etc.

2. Of course, there may be valuable data in case files where there is no significant variation or distortion of the programme and agency intentions, but that should be collected only if it meets the criteria of informational value. Such data do not contribute to the evidential or collectivist values of the image, for such **conformity** in the image is (and should be) assumed, unless documented otherwise through the model in Chapter 3, and it is also well described in many other sources (subject files, publications, procedure manuals, etc.) that collecting voluminous case files simply to prove such conformity is pointless.

3. The concept and term are Trudy Peterson's, in her letter to me of 19 March 1990.

4. As noted earlier, a discussion of records scheduling and records disposition is beyond the scope of this study. An extensive report analyzing these issues and proposing an active, planned approach to scheduling is available for those wishing to pursue the matter. See National Archives of Canada, Scheduling Task Group, "Strategic Planning Framework Study for the Disposition of Government Records," 30 January 1989 (final report of the Group, written by Cynthia J. Durance). An earlier but still useful study of the issue is National Archives and Records Service (now Administration), Task Force on Appraisal and Disposition of Federal Records, "Appraisal and Disposition Policies in NARS: A Report and Recommendations to the Archivist of the United States on Performance of the Appraisal and Disposition Functions in the National Archives and Records Service," 1983.

5. This is perhaps most starkly phrased in the policy statement of the New York State Archives: "If there is any archival 'principle' that delineates our appraisal activity, it is that any records are to be rejected unless there are definite and compelling justifications for their preservation." Cited in F. Gerald Ham, "Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance," in Nancy E. Peace, ed., Archival Choices (Lexington, 1984), p. 136. Ham appropriately entitles this section of his article "disciplined appraisal."

6. Hans Booms, "Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources," Archivaria 24 (Summer 1987), p. 95. Booms' comment is in the context of defending an active approach by archivists to choosing the best records, rather than passively reacting to records schedules submitted by departments with the main intention of storing in records centres or destroying the least valuable, most voluminous records. On this, see also Chapter 3.7.

7. There are, for example, 80,000 cubic feet of nineteenth-century military pension and related records alone in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration (Letter, Trudy Peterson to author, 19 March 1990). Similarly, the NARA Department

of Justice appraisal project selected for permanent preservation, after very careful analysis, 39,000 of the 135,000 feet of litigation case files dating from the early 1940's, and will preserve hereafter 2,400 feet of the 5,800 feet which accumulate annually. (See United States, National Archives and Records Administration, Office of Records Administration, Appraisal of Department of Justice Case Files; Final Report (Washington, 1989), pp. 1-3.) In the celebrated and highly intensive FBI appraisal analysis, over 5 million case files, 500,000 feet, and 100 million index cards were involved; of these, almost 1.2 million case files totally 50,000 feet will be retained by NARA. (See James Gregory Bradsher, "The FBI Records Appraisal," The Midwestern Archivist 13 (1988), pp. 53, 61.) These are enormous volumes of records for archives to retain.

8. For the special characteristics of electronic records and their significance for appraisal, see Harold Naugler, The Archival Appraisal of Machine-Readable Records: A RAMP Study With Guidelines (Paris, 1984), pp. 37-41.

9. See NARA, Appraisal of Department of Justice Case Files, passim. This report of under fifty pages is an excellent, concise example of appraising records containing personal information and its methodologies will interest readers of this present study. The Justice model followed that of the FBI case which was in turn patterned after the Massachusetts court records project led by Michael Hindus. (See Bradsher, "FBI Records Appraisal," Midwestern Archivist, pp. 55-56.

10. As noted in Chapter One, that is outside the scope of this study. In addition to other RAMP studies cited in the bibliography, the reader wishing a general overview of appraisal is referred to Maynard J. Brichford, Archives & Manuscripts: Appraisal and Accessioning (Chicago, 1977). Julia Marks Young's "Annotated Bibliography on Appraisal," American Archivist 48 (Spring 1985), pp. 190-216, lists 128 articles, books, and studies dealing with appraisal and is an excellent introduction to the field in general. A fine summary, which transcends its particular focus on university records and is complete with helpful charts and lists of appraisal factors, is Frank Boles and Julia Marks Young, "Exploring the Black Box: The Appraisal of University Administrative Records," in Ibid., pp. 121-40.

11. This point is made strongly in Larry Hackman and Joan Warnow-Blewett, "The Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and a Case Study," American Archivist 50 (Winter 1987), pp. 15-17.

12. National Archives and Records Service, Disposition of Federal Records (Washington, 1981), table 4, cited in Leonard Rapport, "In the Valley of Decision: What To Do about the Multitude of Files of Quasi Cases," American Archivist 48 (Spring 1985), p. 178, footnote

10. Rapport raises doubts in his piece about whether such criteria do not still bring too many useless records into archives.

13. The concept has been used in the FBI appraisal case, as well as in other investigations of sampling. For a precise analysis of the value of the "fat file" syndrome, see NARA, *Appraisal of Department of Justice Litigation Case Files*, pp. 47-49. Across all 194 categories of records appraised, and following a careful analysis of the files' contents and value, the following ranges of archival values were found:

Archival Value Rating (%)	High	Medium	Low	None
Regular Sample Files	0.2	2.2	15.2	82.2
Single-Section Files	0.0	1.4	14.3	84.1
Multi-Section Files	5.1	19.3	36.2	39.2

14. The case is described in more detail in Michael Cook, *Archives Administration* (London, 1977), pp. 73-74, and in Michael Roper's letter to me, 16 March 1990.

15. The impact of freedom of information and privacy legislation on archival work is analyzed with much sensitivity in Robert J. Hayward, "Federal Access and Privacy Legislation and the Public Archives of Canada," *Archivaria* 18 (Summer 1984), pp. 47-57. For one aspect directly affecting the quality of the image available in records containing personal information, see James Gregory Bradsher, "Privacy Act Expungements: A Reconsideration," *Provenance* 6 (Spring 1988), pp. 1-25. For an example of the increasing concern over the release of especially sensitive personal information to third parties, see Privacy Commissioner of Canada, *AIDS and the Privacy Act* (Ottawa, 1989), pp. 42-44. See also International Council on Archives, *Access to Archives and Privacy: Proceedings of the Twenty-Third International Archival Round Table Conference, Austin, 1985* (Paris, 1987); and once again Michel Duchein, *Obstacles to the Access, Use and Transfer of Information From Archives: A RAMP Study* (Paris, 1983).

16. See Felix Hull, *The Use of Sampling Techniques in the Retention of Records: A RAMP Study With Guidelines* (Paris, 1981). The two best-known case studies are National Archives and Records Service, *Appraisal of the Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation: A Report to Hon. Harold T. Greene, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia* (Washington, 1981); and Michael Stephen Hindus, Theodore M. Hammett, and Barbara M. Hobson, *The Files of the Massachusetts Superior Court, 1859-1959: An Analysis and a Plan for Action* (Boston, 1979). See also the Department of Justice appraisal case described in footnote 7 above.

17. The next paragraphs follow closely Trudy Huskamp Peterson, "Summary of Sampling Techniques," in her *Basic Archival Workshop*

Exercises (Chicago, 1982), pp. 12-13, although some points have been added and details and examples expanded.

18. I am indebted to my colleague, Tom Nesmith, for this tripartite breakdown, which is from his draft (March 1990) policy paper: "Sampling Textual Archival Records in the Government Archives Division, National Archives of Canada."

19. National Archives of Canada, Records Retention and Disposal Authority 88/012.

20. For an example, see Rapport, "In the Valley of Decision," American Archivist, pp. 173-89; and his earlier classic, "No Grandfather Clause: Reappraising Accessioned Records," in Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walch, eds., A Modern Archives Reader (Washington, 1984), pp. 80-90, which article was first published in 1981.

5. GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are meant to summarize the key points of this study. They may serve as an index to the fuller argument and examples presented in the report itself, as each guideline contains, marked off by square brackets, a cross-reference to the relevant chapter and paragraph(s) of the text itself. In general, the guidelines follow the order of the previous four chapters and focus on the actions or directions appropriate for the archivist and records manager dealing with records containing personal information.

Such records in this study are limited to those in paper (or textual) format only [see 1.15] which are organized or retrieved by such personal identifiers as name or social insurance number [2.15]. Subject and policy files **for the purposes of appraisal** in this study are not to be considered as personal information records. Although there may be occasional exceptions, the personal information found in such records is incidental to their main purpose and they must be appraised as part of the larger file registry systems and series to which they belong, using somewhat different or modified appraisal criteria. Similarly, case files arranged, labelled, and retrieved by names of groups, associations, and companies, rather than of individuals, should also be appraised separately.

Archivists whose first language is not English may wish to refer to the special section [2.3 - 2.10] where the archival terms used in the study are defined.

The principal guidelines from this study are given below:

1. Records containing personal information have value to archives because they

    -- protect the rights of citizens [1.2],

    -- encourage historical and other research to uncover the collective memory of society [1.3],

    -- aid in the development of public policy [1.4], and

    -- support genealogical interests [1.5].

2. There are several major problems in appraising records containing personal information:

   -- their enormous bulk [1.7],

   -- their fragmented and uneven quality [1.8],

   -- increasing concerns about violating personal privacy by permitting the collection of such data in the first place or its later diffusion [1.9], and

   -- political pressure placed on archives to accept many personal information records which have limited or no archival value by other standards [1.10].

3. Archivists in North America especially have not developed sound appraisal theory and their resulting acquisitions of records have often been piecemeal, uncoordinated, and of poor quality [1.12]. This glaring theoretical omission, while serious for all types of records, is particularly troubling for those containing personal information because of the special problems they present (see Guideline 2 above).

4. Personal information is defined as any information about an identifiable individual recorded in any form [2.11]. Many examples of such information are given in this section of the study, as well as many of the types of records in which personal information is found and many of the contexts or government functions in which it is created [2.11 - 2.13].

5. A physical typology of the six major categories of records or aggregations of records where identifiable personal information can be found is presented in some detail. These are

   -- forms,

   -- lists and registers,

   -- letterbooks and volumes,

   -- particular instance case files,

   -- continuing events case files, and

   -- indexes [2.16: a. to f.].

   In appraising personal information records, the physical linkages between records [2.17], other related media and artifacts [2.18], and the arrangement of the records [2.19] must be considered.

6. Personal information records also contain important characteristics based on their context, and these contextual factors include:

   -- scope and coverage,

   -- circumstances surrounding creation, and

   -- location in the administrative hierarchy [2.20].

7. There are certain categories of personal information which are **essential** and must be kept by all archivists around the world. These are

   -- records proving civil status,

   -- land registration records,

   -- certain court and legal records, and

   -- the national census of the population [2.22 - 2.23].

8. The appraisal of personnel records of government employees is, for convenience, handled separately, although most such records are continuing events case files. While the electronic version of these records is most important, some of the paper case files should be retained. Selection criteria are proposed, including using levels in the hierarchy and special employee categories to segregate important files, as well as other factors to identify their possible informational value. It is suggested that personnel records of the national police and armed forces of a country be treated in an analogous way [2.24 - 2.28].

9. The "politics of appraisal" are discussed, whereby archives are sometimes forced by political or public pressure to keep certain records which they would not retain otherwise. The growing interest in genealogy is a major concern here. While genealogical information is best collected through the essential records category (see Guideline 7) or other sources, and will appear incidentally in many series and samples of archival records acquired for other reasons, the vast majority of case files from most operational programmes should not be retained by a national archives **purely** for genealogical value. If that is their **only** value, then they should almost always be destroyed [2.29].

10. It is important to distinguish (as Chapters 3 and 4 of this study do) between personal information records -- primarily series of case files and individual case files -- which have permanent value, on the one hand, for what they reveal collectively about the phenomenon they describe or for the

evidence of government operations they contain, and, on the other hand, those which have informational value because of what they reveal about specific persons, places, or things [2.30].

11. Chapter 3 addresses the first and most difficult of these concerns: how to identify the collective and evidential value in case file series. It advances a theoretical model of "macro-appraisal" which focuses first on the dynamic social forces brought to bear in the creation of personal information records. It is necessary to understand the nature of the citizen-state interaction, and the many variables present therein, before the archivist can pinpoint the best series to appraise. In the first instance, then, the appraisal of case files containing personal information must move from the physical to the conceptual, from the actual records to the functions and structures in society responsible for the creation of those records [3.1 -3.5].

12. This conceptual approach to appraisal requires a research agenda for archivists in their daily activities. **Appraisal is a work of careful analysis and of archival, diplomatic, and historical scholarship, not a mere procedure or process.** Applying guidelines or checklists in the appraisal process, as well as developing broader acquisition strategies, only works if such application is based on a rich understanding by the archivist of

-- the history of the records creator,

-- its official functions and legal mandates,

-- its internal organizational structure,

-- its decision-making processes,

-- its records-creating procedures, and

-- the changes in all these over time [3.6].

13. Such a conceptual approach to appraisal should be coupled with an active archivally driven emphasis to records management and records disposition activity. In an archivally directed appraisal environment, archivists focus actively on the 5 per cent (or less) of records in a government's holdings which have permanent value rather than passively on approving for destruction the 95 per cent without continuing value [3.7 and 4.8].

14. Archivists must incorporate institutional acquisition policies and mandates into their appraisal framework, as these will

also define (and usually narrow) the field from which records can be acquired [3.8].

15. The present and anticipated use of records, and thus by implication consultations with users, should not play a significant role in the appraisal process. It is better for archivists to speculate less on possible uses for records tomorrow and to concentrate more on developing criteria to ensure that the records being acquired reflect the values, patterns, and functions of the society contemporary to the records creators [3.10, 3.6].

16. The departments and agencies of government will over time reflect the "image" of society -- that is, they will reflect the hopes, aspirations, activities, and frustrations articulated by its citizens and this will be most evident where the citizen-state interaction is most intense. The model presented in this chapter attempts to explain the mechanisms or loci in society where the citizen interacts with the state to produce the clearest insights (and thus the best documentary evidence) into societal dynamics and issues. Appraisal consists then of ensuring that the quality of the "image" reflected in records selected for archival retention is high [3.10 - 3.16].

17. The model contains three factors which define the citizen-state interaction:

    -- the programme [3.18 - 3.22],

    -- the agency [3.23 - 3.26], and

    -- the citizen [3.27 - 3.28].

    From this interaction are created the records containing personal information which the archivist must appraise. Taking these three factors in turn and analyzing the key variables of each, these sections of the chapter explore the "macro-appraisal" approach suitable for selecting such records. This explanation of the interaction of the programme, agency, and citizen focuses on the mechanics or location or nature of the formation of the image of society which the archivist must consider. This interaction varies widely from one set of citizen-state interactions to another, and thus from one series to another of the resultant personal information records. Depending on the type of variation involved, the records have greater or less permanent value. **In short, the general rule for appraisal in the model is that the narrower and less flexible the range of interaction between the citizen on the one hand and the administrator (or agency) and programme on the other, the less significance the**

personal information case files will have in honing the societal image [3.29 - 3.31].

18. Archivists should appraise series of records containing personal information comprehensively, as part of a larger information universe. Not to do so is to start at the bottom of the records pyramid with the most voluminous and repetitive records having the least value, rather than at the top. There should be three broad phases in appraisal of case files:

-- Start with the policy files, followed by subject files, electronic records, central government records, procedure and forms manuals, and published and near-published information.

-- After determining which policy and subject records and which electronic data bases will be preserved by the archives, as well as the availability of other relevant information, only then will the archivist be able to assess both the sharpness of the image in the citizen-state interaction **and** the value of the connected case records containing personal information for demonstrating collectively or holistically that image.

-- Finally, if the case file series do not have value in sharpening the collective societal image, they should still be appraised, as a last step, for the informational value they may have about specific individuals, events, and places.

In this comprehensive approach, therefore, actually looking at the records containing personal information is, ironically, the last rather than the first step in appraising such records [4.1 - 4.3].

19. There is a close link between archival appraisal and a sound records management programme. While there may be differences in priorities which can work against this comprehensive approach to records disposition described in Guideline 18, a commitment to strategic planning of the scheduling process can minimalize these problems [1.13, 4.4, 4.7].

20. Archivists should adopt the "cluster concept" when they appraise records. If there are several interrelated series of personal information records, these should be appraised together so that overlapping information may be more readily identified and thus a better appraisal made [4.5].

21. Records centre storage can be used to gain distance and perspective in making appraisal decisions, especially for those series of records involving public issues or government functions which are controversial, hotly debated in public

forums, and emotion-laden for many citizens (including archivists) at the time of their occurrence. Records managers and archivists must guard against excessive use of this strategy in order to avoid filling centres with useless records and incurring ever-mounting storage costs.

22. The main working rule for archivists in appraising **all** records is to destroy them. **The focus for the archivist should not be on explaining what is being destroyed, but rather on justifying what is being kept.** [4.8, also 3.7].

23. Case file series and other personal information records should usually be kept in electronic rather than paper format, where both exist. The advantages of the machine-readable version of the record are numerous, in addition to obvious savings in space and storage costs:

-- manipulability of the information,

-- ease of anonymization permitting public access in light of tougher privacy laws,

-- linkage to other data to create "new" information bases, and

-- potential for aggregation and statistical analysis [4.11, see also 2.24].

24. Records containing personal information should not normally be kept **only** to document the historical significance of a programme or an agency per sé (as opposed to the concept of sharpening the societal image or preserving information on specific people, places, and things). The only exception is that a small example of case files may sometimes be kept to demonstrate the forms used where the programme was of particular importance and these cannot be obtained elsewhere, which might ironically be especially true for failed programmes [3.20]. Keeping large examples or more formal samples **only** to show the processes of the agency or the nature of its daily operations is rarely justifiable [4.12, also 3.18, 3.26, 3.27].

25. Archivists must ensure that they do not give undue weight to various types of records. They cannot appraise a large series of case files by "spot-checking" or by accepting the word of the agency's officials that various records are duplicated in other series and/or in other levels of the administrative hierarchy. A sampling methodology for purposes of appraisal (rather than acquisition) is suggested as a solution [4.15].

26. Once a series has been isolated as valuable for its collective and evidential value to the societal image, there are specific appraisal criteria used in order to assess the **series as a whole** [4.16 - 4.18]:

-- completeness,

-- authenticity,

-- uniqueness,

-- relationship to other records,

-- inclusive dates and time-span,

-- extent,

-- usability, and

-- a flexibility factor as opposed to rigidity

27. For records valuable only for their informational value residing in **special cases within a series**, specific appraisal criteria are also proposed. These include cases which

-- established a precedent and therefore resulted in a major policy or procedural change;

-- were involved in extensive litigation;

-- received wide-spread attention from the news media;

-- were widely recognized for their uniqueness by established authorities outside the agency; or

-- were reviewed at length in the agency's annual report to its legislative sponsor.

In addition to various other qualitative factors suggested to determine the few important files from the routine many, the use of the "fat file" method is also discussed and recommended [4.19 - 4.20].

28. Various practical and preservation issues affect archival appraisal:

-- storage and other costs,

-- statutory prohibitions,

-- media conversion,

-- the timing of records transfers,

-- archival networks, and

-- access and privacy restrictions [4.21 - 4.27].

The impact of these factors on appraisal is explained in some detail in these sections.

29. If records are still actively used in an agency or likely to be subject to many freedom of information or privacy requests, it is desirable to extend their formal retention period and thus delay their transfer to the archives in order to avoid excessive reference workloads. Conversely, the records are physically threatened with either outright destruction or rearrangement that would obliterate their original order, then the retention periods should be shortened and the records safeguarded in the archives as soon as possible [4.25].

30. After the appraisal research and analysis are completed, the archivist must choose from among five appraisal options:

-- keep all the records,

-- keep only key documents from files,

-- sample the files,

-- take an example of the records, or

-- destroy all the records [4.28].

31. For the convenience of users of this report, the four principal methods of sampling are summarized, with examples and the advantages and disadvantages of each method noted:

-- random statistical or probability sampling,

-- systematic or physically based sampling,

-- exemplary or qualitatively based sampling, and

-- exceptional sampling [4.30 - 4.36].

32. Most appraisal decisions for series of records containing personal information will be complicated and stratified depending on the agency, programme, their citizens, and the nature of the records. A concrete example is given based on Canadian immigration case files which might be helpful for readers [4.37].

33. In conclusion, when appraising records containing personal information as defined in this study, the archivist must consider four factors in this order:

- researching and applying the "macro-appraisal" model of the societal "image";
- utilizing the comprehensive approach to records assessment and scheduling;
- applying the general working rules and specific appraisal criteria; and
- tempering the decision, if at this point it is still positive, with whatever relevant practical, preservation, and political considerations may exist.

In most cases, the latter will lead to some form of sampling as the best option.

APPENDIX

APPRAISAL CONSIDERATIONS, FBI PROJECT

In the celebrated Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) records case, archival appraisal criteria were formally tabled by the National Archives and Records Administration in the final report. Although they do not cover all the factors in this present study, these criteria are reproduced here as an additional guideline or checklist for archivists appraising records containing personal informal. (See National Archives and Records Service, Appraisal of the Records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation: A Report to Hon. Harold T. Greene, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia (Washington, 1981), volume 2, appendix D, unpaginated.)

Physical and intellectual characteristics of the classification

- Does the classification contain investigations of a single type or multiple types of violations?
- What changes occurred in the classification over time?
- What is the current volume of records? What is the rate of accumulation?
- How extensive is the destruction?
- What level of research value is found in Headquarters? In Field and Legats?*
- Is there a correlation between size of the file and research value?
- Is there a correlation between any other identifiable characteristic of the file and research value?
- Is the Office of Origin in Headquarters or in the Field?
- Is there a difference in research value between Office of Origin and Auxiliary Office files?

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* Legats is the term for the foreign office(s) of the FBI.

- Are certain Field Offices exceptionally important for this type of investigation?

- Is it feasible to develop a sample from all Field Offices? From one? From several?

Duplication and linkage of the classification

- Does the National Archives hold other records documenting the same activity?

- What is the disposition, by schedule, of records of another agency documenting the same activity?

- Can the FBI records be linked to the records of another agency? How easily?

- Does the FBI have primary, shared or a secondary jurisdiction for this violation?

- Are these records a primary source or a secondary source of information on the violation? If a secondary, are they necessary to document the violation?

- Are there other sources in Bureau records for information on the Bureau's activity in this investigative area? What is the disposition of these records? Are they sufficient documentation by the Bureau closely linked to the violation in the classification under consideration?

Information in the case file

- How significant is the violation that is the subject of these files?

- How significant is the information contained in these files about the violation?

- How significant did the Bureau consider the violation?

- What types of information are found in these files?

- How did the case files, reflecting how investigations were actually conducted, compare to stated policies on how they were supposed to be conducted?

- Do the files document the Bureau's use of extraordinary or controversial techniques and/or violations of constitutional rights?

- Wnat types of research can be done from these files? How likely it is that it will be done?

- Is the information amenable to statistical analysis?

- In the absence of such information, would studies in a particular field be impaired?

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